

BATTLE OF THE STORY

WORKSHEET

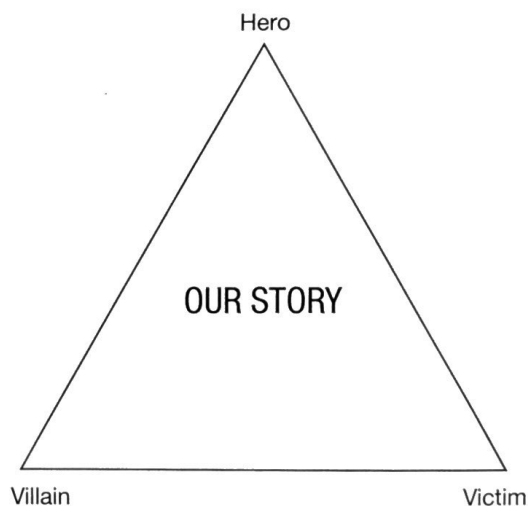
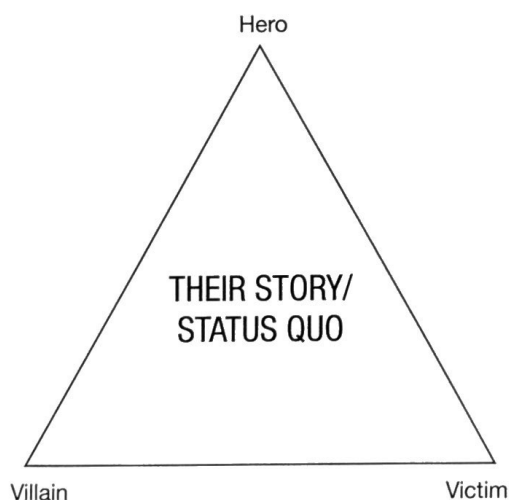
DIRECTIONS: This exercise is intended to help grassroots activists create more compelling narratives to communicate their campaigns. The Battle of the Story is a framework for applying a “narrative power analysis” to an issue—whether it’s the story that specific power holders are telling about the issue or just the accepted status quo perception that we are campaigning to change. The worksheet asks you to apply four different elements of story (conflict, characters, imagery/show don’t tell, and foreshadowing) to both the power holder’s story and then our story as change agents. Tell each story on its own terms, not the “truth” but rather the story. The bottom row is the place to step out of the story and analyze it by identifying the assumptions that allow each of the stories to operate. For our stories these assumptions may be our core values but many times the assumptions of our opponent’s story are contradictions and weaknesses that we can use to challenge their story’s framing by exposing hidden agendas or contrasting alternate visions of the future. At the completion of this chart you should be able to revisit each story and begin developing some frames and core messages that will help you win the Battle of the Story!

ELEMENTS OF STORY	OPPOSITION OR STATUS QUO STORY (THEM)	ADVOCATES / CHANGE AGENTS (US)
CONFLICT How is the problem being framed? Who or what is the conflict between? Are there good guys and bad guys? What’s at stake?		
CHARACTERS Who are the specific victims? Who are the messengers that tell the story? Do they get to speak for themselves or is someone speaking on their behalf?		
IMAGERY/SHOW DON’T TELL What powerful images does the story provide? Are there relevant metaphors, symbols or specific examples that embody the larger story?		
FORESHADOWING How does each story show us the future? What is the vision that the story offers of how things will be if the conflict resolves successfully?		
ASSUMPTIONS What are the unstated assumptions? What does someone have to believe to accept the story as true? What values are reflected in the story?		

DRAMA TRIANGLE

DIRECTIONS: The framing of a narrative often hinges on how the different characters are cast as the hero, the villain and the victim. The Battle of the Story between two opposing sides of an issue is often waged over what label gets assigned to the same character in each story. Think about a campaign you are currently working on and list out who are the Heroes, Villains and Victims according to the opposition's story and then according to yours.

	THEIR STORY/STATUS QUO	OUR STORY
HEROES		
VILLAINS		
VICTIMS		



Look carefully at similarities and differences. How do they compare? What are the implications for your strategy and framing?

CORNERSTONES

WORKSHEET

DIRECTIONS: Take a moment to think about an organizing campaign or action you are currently working on and then practice the Cornerstones tool by seeing if you can identify all of the parts below. The cornerstones are the defining aspects of a campaign that set the parameters for developing a narrative. Before developing your narrative strategy it is important to clarify all of these cornerstones. They will provide the foundation on which to build your narrative.

GOAL

What are we trying to achieve? What is the specific change we are trying to make?

AUDIENCE

Who are the specific groups of people that we most need to reach and persuade?

TARGET

Who is the decision-maker that can make this desired change happen?

CONSTITUENCY

Who is our base? The organized groups of people or communities who we already work with, represent or share common interests with.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS/EXISTING HOOKS