



THE BATTLE OF THE STORY WORKSHEET

This exercise is intended to help activists create more compelling narratives to communicate our campaigns. The Battle of the Story is the framework through which we can analyze the current “narrative landscape” around 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 telling (conflict, characters, show don’t tell, and foreshadowing) to *both* the power holder’s story and our change story. Begin with the opposition story so you can understand what the story you need to change is. Remember, *tell the story, not the “truth.”* The final row is the place to step out of the story and analyze it by identifying the underlying assumptions that allow each of the stories to operate. For our stories, these assumptions may be our core values. Oftentimes 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 in terms of overarching frames and core values messages that can be developed into your story-based strategy.

STORY	OPPONENTS/Status Quo	CHANGE AGENTS
CONFLICT What is the problem here? Who is the conflict between (<i>x</i> vs. <i>y</i>)? Who are the good guys and the bad guys? What is in/outside of this frame?		
CHARACTERS Who are the messengers that tell the story? Who are the specific victims? Do they get to speak for themselves or is someone speaking on their behalf? Who is credible?		
SHOW DON’T TELL When you hear this story, what images, metaphors, or anecdotes come to mind? How does the story engage your values and encourage you to choose sides, without telling you what to think?		
FORESHADOWING How the story show us what comes next, and hint at the future? What is the vision that the story offers? How will this conflict be resolved successfully?		
ASSUMPTIONS What are the unstated assumptions? What does someone have to believe to accept the story as truth?		