

Framing your issue

Science Facts and Analysis from Science for Georgia

When working to create change, it is important to clearly state your problem and proposed solution and then make these relevant to your target audience.

Pulling together a relevant, concise, and actionable statement allows you to quickly explain what you are doing to people outside your inner circle. This worksheet will walk you through the creation of this issue statement.

Step 1: Identify Your Audience and Relevance

Everything must relate to your audience. You already know about your subject and why it is important. You need to get the audience on board with your idea by connecting to them.

Who are you talking to?

Research about your audience. Learn about the policies they support or oppose and their most recent field of interest.

What would you like them to do? What is a positive outcome of your encounter?

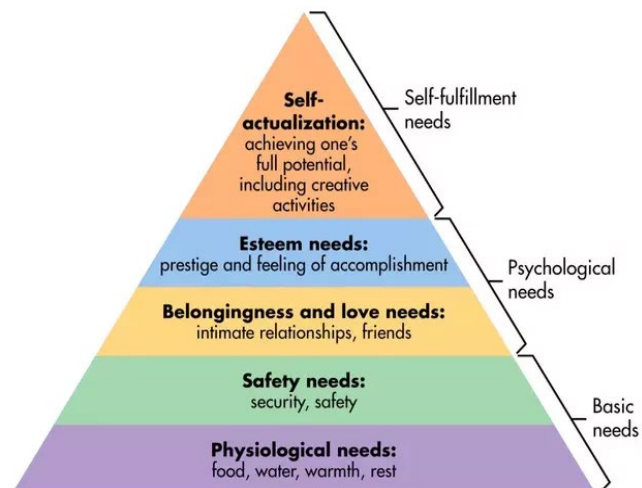
List out your communication goals. Rank your goals in order of importance.

Think of some ways your topic could be relevant to your audience.

In general, people can identify with things that relate to:

- Basic Needs – Health, Housing, Food, Water,
- Economy
- Education
- Safety & Security
- Freedom & Justice
- Environment
- “For the children...”
- “For the farmers...”

Maslow’s Hierarchy (at right) also outlines relevance to people.



Write down how your problem and proposed solution is relevant to any of the above topics.

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Step 2 – figure out a simple message

You know what your problem is but now you need to make sure others understand it, empathize with it, and see the benefit of your solution.

Use the message template below to really home in on your idea. For each part, only write **1-2 sentences so you stay concise and high level.**

This template is from *Escape from the Ivory Tower* by Nancy Baron <https://www.amazon.com/Escape-Ivory-Tower-Making-Science/dp/1597266647>

MESSAGE BOX

PROBLEM	What is the problem you need to address?
SO WHAT	Why do others care about or empathize with your problem?
SOLUTION	What do you want people to do to solve the problem?
BENEFIT	What is the benefit for people if the solution is implemented? Not the benefit to you – but the benefit to society.

Now to make that as succinct as possible. Write this “message box” in ever fewer words.

Say it in 3 sentences:

Say it in 1 sentence:

Say it in 5 words:

These 5 words are your main point.



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Step 3: Call to action

Now that you know your main message – what is it that you want people to do? You must give them both a **thing to do** and a **way to do it**.

“**Will you support us** by **writing your legislator to encourage them to implement a plastic bag fee?**”

Step 4: Tell a Story

People always remember a story. Write down a personal story or an anecdote about your topic that illustrates and adds humanity.

Step 5: Your 3-min Pitch

Now that you know what you want to say and how to say it, it’s time to pull it all together into a clear, concise, and actionable “elevator speech.” Write your pitch out – starting with a memorable “hook” or story to pique their interest, followed by a brief telling of your message box. Wrap it up with a call-to-action – give them something to do and tell them precisely how to do it.

Write down your

- Hook Story
- Problem → So What → Solution → Benefit
- Thing to do and way to do it

