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Storytelling vs tech writing

Tech writing gives you the goods right up front, storytelling delays gratification until the payoff.



Good technical writing is short, tight, and to-the-point. It is called inverse pyramid since the important part is on the top. You should avoid drama style or storytelling in tech writing.

Good **storytelling** works along these lines: (136 words)

Act 1

Boy meets girl.

Boy is deeply flawed, with personal, social and spiritual issues.

Girl is damaged goods as well, broken in pieces so small she slips right through the basket.

Act 2

Boy encounters MacGuffin*.

Boy battles MacGuffin, both helped and hurt by his flaws and issues.

Girl learns from watching the battle and connects with her humanity.

MacGuffin seems overpowering and Boy and Girl look to be doomed.

Act 3

Against improbable odds, Boy defeats MacGuffin, realizing his own personal greatness.

Boy is redeemed by victory and his flaws, sins, issues, and shortcomings are washed away.

Girl realizes that boy was motivated to goodness and victory by love for her.

Girl achieves fulfillment and wholeness with the world.

Boy and girl join together in a synergistic oneness, sharing intellectual, emotional and physical nirvana.

Technical writing: (3 words)

Sally married Jimmy.

So you can see where technical writing is more efficient than storytelling. It is also a little crass, sterile, and boring. So the art of good tech writing is getting to the point, and clearly, while having some panache that makes the reader keep reading.

* The director and producer Alfred Hitchcock popularized both the term "MacGuffin" and the technique. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Hitchcock explained the term in a 1939 lecture at Columbia University: "[W]e have a name in the studio, and we call it the 'MacGuffin.' It is the mechanical element that usually crops up in any story. In crook stories it is always the necklace and in spy stories it is always the papers."