

ABT DEVELOPMENT

The 3 Step Process for Strengthening an ABT

REFERENCE CARD

Step One - BUT: What is your problem?

SINGULAR NARRATIVE - don't want multiple narratives

CORRECT SOURCE — is the problem pollution killing fish in a river, or is it laws that allow for pollution?

WHAT'S PREVENTING A SOLUTION - if the problem is pollution, then why isn't it stopped?

Step Two - AND: Go back and fix your setup

The AND material is two main elements.

ORDINARY WORLD - simple opening description, such as, "Management of caribou herds in Alaska has been studied for over a century, AND ..."

WHAT'S AT STAKE - this is the "Why should we care?" element. For example, "... AND caribou are a major source of Alaska's \$126 million annual income from tourism."

NOTE: Always keep in mind: "The power of storytelling rests in the specifics." Try to make the What's at Stake element as specific as possible — not just "caribou are important," but actually how they are important (tourism) and if possible a dollar or aesthetic value.

Step Three - BUT, THEREFORE: The Two Moments

The two moments of transition are the best chances to break through the noise of our information-saturated world and capture attention. You want to maximize CONTRAST, going from calm to excited. You want to go from the WHAT to the HOW (not the reverse).

WHAT - the overall statement of the problem

HOW - the details that cause the problem

RIGHT WAY: “BUT caribou are now threatened BECAUSE of habitat loss, pollution, and hunting.”

WRONG WAY: “BUT habitat loss, pollution, and hunting now threaten caribou.”

THE DETAILED ABT

(Ordinary World) **AND** (What's At Stake, maybe even using the IF/THEN structure), **BUT** (WHAT), **BECAUSE** (HOW), **THEREFORE** (WHAT), **BY** (HOW)

The opening of Martin Luther King, Jr's “I Have A Dream” speech is a model of ABT excellence at work.

Five score years ago,¹ a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. (AND) This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves² who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.³ **BUT** one hundred years later,⁴ the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land. So (THEREFORE)⁶ we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.⁵

1 - Opens with TIME, the most powerful aspect of narrative, 2 - gives a SPECIFIC number for “what’s at stake”, 3 - ends opening with peaceful/end of story feeling, 4 - begins contradiction with WHAT the problem is, 5 - follows with the HOW of the problem, 6 - ends with “So,” the alternate form of THEREFORE