

Storytelling for Researchers

Training courses to improve your writing, presenting and communicating with scientist and storyteller Dr Anna Ploszajski.

At the start of every story is a question; what if?

In research, we ask “what if...?” too, but we call this question a hypothesis, and seek to answer it with experiments and studies. Despite this likeness between research and stories, many of us struggle to communicate our results effectively and engagingly.

Well, what if researchers became better storytellers?

I'm a materials scientist turned storyteller, and I believe that borrowing simple techniques from storytelling can bring to life even the most technical research topic. These techniques have won me awards at conferences, landed me my dream job and meant that I passed my PhD viva with no corrections.

I reckon I can do the same for you too.

In this three-part training series, I will give you the tools you need to tell creative and compelling stories about your work to make you more memorable, understandable and engaging, increasing the overall impact of your work.

We'll cover how to structure like a storyteller, how to create compelling worlds and characters (even in a literature review!), and how to use language succinctly and engagingly to make your message pitch-perfect for any future audience.

There's no prior experience of creative writing or presenting required – this training is for everyone from folks who detest writing and want to inject some fun into the day-job, to regular writers and presenters looking to step up their game to the next level. It can be delivered in-person or online.

These foundational skills can be tailored to your specific needs, for example:

- Writing papers
- Writing PhD theses
- Giving presentations
- Writing grant or fellowship proposals
- Public engagement
- Interacting with the media

To discuss how I can help you tell the best stories...

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About the Training

Part 1: Core Story Skills (half-day)

Act 1: Story & Structure

In this part, I'll introduce you to the world of storytelling and show you why it's a powerful tool for a researcher to master. Then, we'll cover the theory of how stories are structured and put it into practice with useful examples. I'll help you identify the story beats in your own research and craft this into a narrative, whether it be for an academic paper, grant proposal, thesis or conference presentation.

Act 2: Worlds & Characters

In this part, I'll be demonstrating the importance of creating compelling worlds and characters in your story. You'll world-build with a literature review, and assess who you are as the protagonist and narrator of your research story.

Act 3: Use of Language

This part is all about using language in the best way possible, including tailoring your message to different audiences, talking like a human, and adding creative flair to your story.

Part 2: Practice (half-day)

These foundational skills will be tailored to your choice of application(s), for example:

- Writing papers for journals
- Writing PhD theses
- Giving presentations
- Writing grant or fellowship proposals
- Public engagement, writing for the public, podcasting or blogs
- Interacting with the media

The training can be run online or in-person (location dependent) over a single full day or across two half-days with some time in between. I can also run shorter 45, 60- or 90-minute 'Best Of' sessions suitable for conferences or guest lecture slots.

Previous Clients



About the Trainer

Dr Anna Ploszajski is an award-winning materials scientist, writer, presenter, comedian, trainer and storyteller based in London. She has a PhD in Materials Science and identifies as a materials generalist; equally fascinated by merino wool as stainless steel, through all the wonderful metals, plastics, ceramics, glasses and natural substances that make up our material world.

Anna channels this passion by storytelling with materials on the screen, radio, stage and page; her first book, *Handmade: A Scientist's Search for Meaning Through Making*, is out now. Anna can often be found London's pub basements performing stand-up comedy about materials and making. She also frequents science festivals across the country entertaining audiences with demopacked shows. Anna's podcast, *Handmade*, features weekly chats with artists, makers, movers and shakers all with a love of materials.



Having developed her own unique blend of autobiographical and technical science communication, Anna now trains professional researchers in the art of scientific storytelling. She has won numerous prestigious industry awards for her work, including Young Engineer of the Year by the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Silver Medal from the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3). In 2022 she was made a Fellow of the IOM3, one of the youngest in its history.

In her spare time, Anna plays the trumpet in a funk and soul covers band called Don't Freak Out and is an ultra-endurance open water swimmer; she swam the English Channel in July 2018.

Oh, and it's pronounced "Por-shy-ski".

