

Bring Clarity, Relevance and Impact to Your Message!

You can use this form to prepare for: an elevator pitch, the beginning of a longer talk, a conversation with funders, a media interview...or even your family at the holidays!

Before you generate your BIG IDEA with this form, it is important to consider your audience.

Communication only exists if the speaker's message resonates in some way with their audience. You wouldn't speak the same way to a kindergartner as you would a rocket scientist – so start with them. Recognizing their needs first will help you shape what to include and exclude, and help you consider audience-appropriate language and examples.

WHO is your audience?	<i>A job or research interviewer? The media? A funding source?</i>	WHY is this topic important to them?
WHO are you?	<i>Relationship to audience and/or your credentials.</i>	WHY do you care about this topic?
WHAT is your Goal?	<i>What do you want your audience to think, feel or do?</i>	



Your audience might have a different perspective on your topic than you do. You might encounter misunderstanding or even confrontation from a listener. When this happens, you need to have a strategy that 1) shows understanding and even empathy for their position, and 2) bridges the conversation back to your BIG IDEA.

One way is to think about the common ground that you both share. For example, a pediatrician talking to a vaccine-hesitant parent—their common ground is that both doctor and parent are concerned with the health of the child. Let's construct your message in a conversational way. Consider beginning with language like: *"One thing we **BOTH** care about is _____."*

You have considered the people involved in this communication scenario and the common ground that exists between you. **Drawing on that information, and in the simplest form, what is this topic about? This is The BIG IDEA.** The BIG IDEA needs to be drawn from your passion about this topic and described in a way that is relevant to the cares and concerns of your audience. For example, as a pediatrician, Evonne's BIG IDEA is that the benefits of vaccination far outweigh the slight chance of side effects you might be concerned with.

Consider beginning with language like: *"The thing I care about most in this area is _____."*

Use the space below (if desired) to expand the BIG IDEA and, if applicable, add your research question. Consider beginning with language like: *"I / our team are trying to / we wondered if _____."*

What is the most novel aspect of what you are doing? How do you stand apart?

Remember, people are a part of this story.

An example, analogy or metaphor helps support understanding (don't skip these steps)

(EXAMPLE: "An example of this is _____.")

(ANALOGY or METAPHOR: "It's kind of like _____.")

How will the world change? *Remember to include what is at stake. What will happen if this work succeeds or fails?*

The final statement is the only thing many audiences remember. Make it count! "The most important thing to remember is _____." *(Revisit what makes you novel and why it should matter to them).*

In speaking or writing, you may choose to expand on some of these ideas, and/or leave some out. You may choose to reorder this writing to engage your audience more directly. It is likely that this template has provided a framework that you might need to tie together with transitions. The intent is to give you a starting point that will make your message not only reflective of your work – but resonant to the audience in front of you. Remember, what you say is only as valuable as how you say it. **How people hear your message determines whether you make a connection – so go back to your WHY and tap into that passion to motivate your reason to speak. Good luck!**