

Worksheet: What's your science message?

The following worksheet is authored by the University of Waterloo's Water Institute. It accompanies the [What's your science webinar](#) presented by the AGU's Sharing Science program. The purpose of the worksheet is to help you apply learnings from the webinar to your own research and communications. You are encouraged to watch the webinar before filling out this worksheet to optimize its value.

Identify your audience

- See "Identify Your Audience" worksheet.

How to develop a generic science message

Begin by distilling your research to answer key questions:

Issue - what is the overarching issue or topic you are addressing (just a few words)?

Problem - what part of the larger issue are you addressing?

So What - why should your audience care?

Solutions - what are the options for solving the problem you identified?

Benefits – what are the benefits of addressing the problem?

Tip: A **Message Box** is a great tool to help write your science message. Learn more about the benefits of using a Message Box, tips for filling it out and find examples of science messages:

<https://www.compasscicomm.org/leadership-development/the-message-box/>

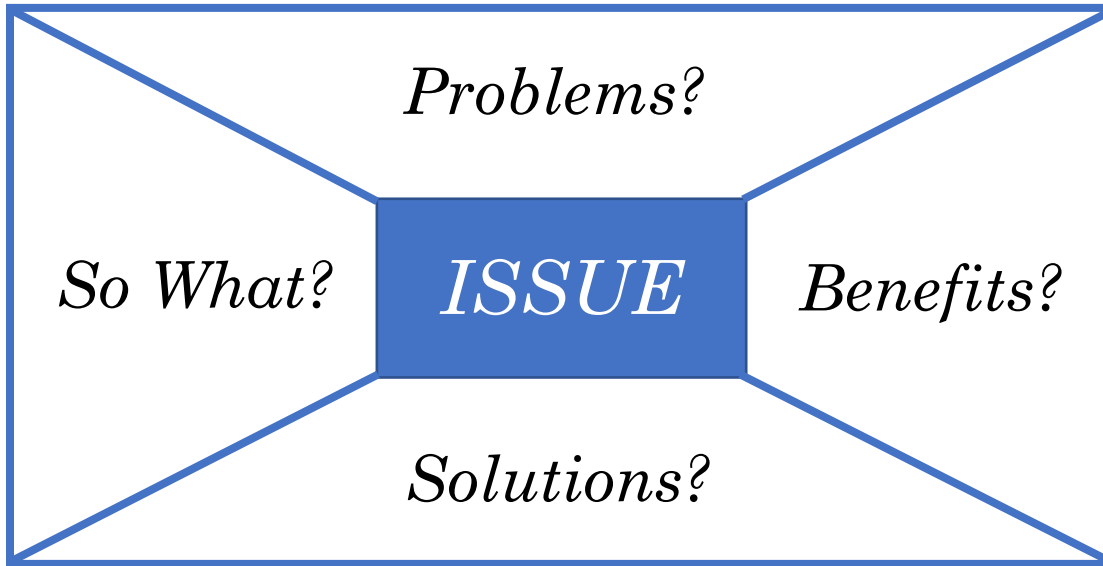


Figure 1: Message Box

How to develop your science message for the media

Before writing a media release or talking to the **media** about your research findings, it is a good idea to articulate your media message. This includes developing clear, concise answers to the following:

What do we know (e.g., context, background):

What is new (e.g., how is your study different than others):

Why it matters (e.g., the impact on people's lives)

Write a **take home message**: 2-3 main points about what you want people to remember from your work. Include your call to action:

How to develop your science message for politicians

Before talking to a **political leader**, it is a good idea to understand their priorities and perspectives so that you can develop a message that will resonate with them personally. Begin by looking up their background. Key pieces of information may include:

Political party affiliation:

Official party positions related to your topic:

Prior profession of the political leader:

Membership in committees / caucuses:

Current issues of concern in their constituency:

Tip

The Ontario Legislative Assembly works through committees of small groups of Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) who meet to consider bills or other specific issues.

Find a list of committees, their current business and members:

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/committees>

Tip

Learn more about how policies and laws are made through the *Canadian Policy 101 Training Module*

Next develop your ask, or the purpose of your visit or communication. There are different types of asks including:

- Changes to a policy (be specific so it can be acted on)
- Offer of a relationship (how can you be a resource to the political leader?)

The **Message Box for Advocacy** is slightly different than your general message and includes stories about the emotional connect to the issue, its relevance and a specific call to action.

Emotional connection (e.g., a story that emphasizes why it is important to address the issue):

Relevance (e.g., what is the relevance of your science):

Call to action (e.g., what does the member need to do to implement your recommendation):

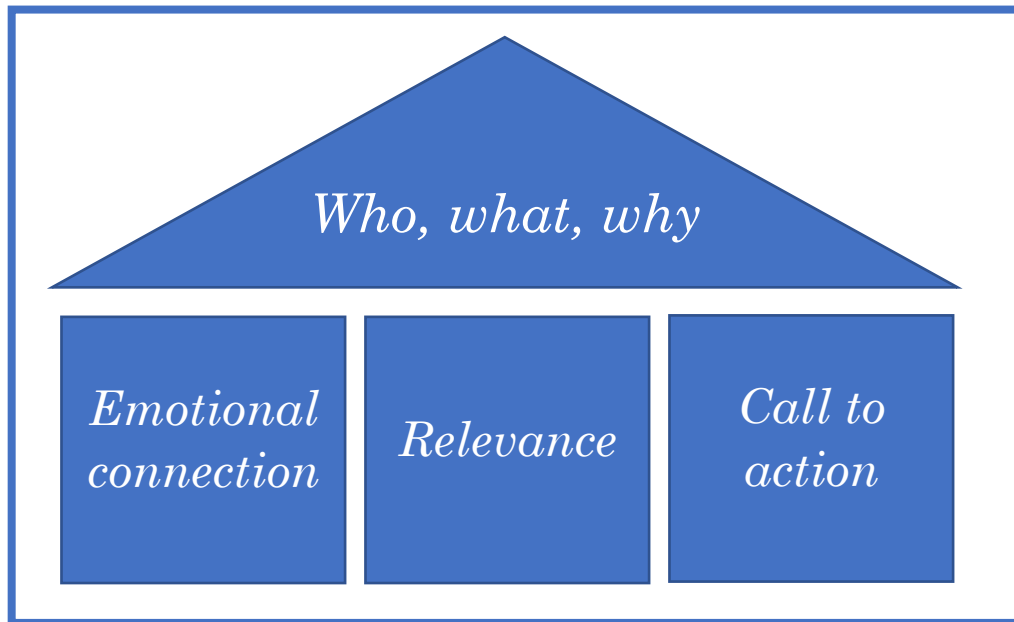


Figure 2: Message Box for Advocacy

Other tips and resources

- Avoid Jargon in your science message – use words that are less technical to ensure your message is understood
 - [Watch your words: science vocabulary with dual meanings](#) (Author: AGU Sharing Science program)
- [Essential Tips and Tools for Communicating Your Science](#) (Author: AGU Sharing Science program)