

HOW TO CRAFT A STORY

Guide to Story, Plot, and Script

Text

Miia Kallioinen (Pellon Kehitys Oy) and
Natalia Pulakka (Lapland UAS)

Illustrations and layout

Markku Karjalainen and
Pia Keränen (Lapland UAS)



We encounter a few thousand commercial messages every day. What makes your company unique? What helps it to stand out from the noise? Storytelling is a way to attract customers and separate you from competitors. While building your own business story, you need to consider business from different aspects. Learn how to write and structure your story appealingly.

FINDING YOUR BUSINESS STORY

“The Business story is designed to trigger the listener to take an effective action. If it doesn’t, the story fails”

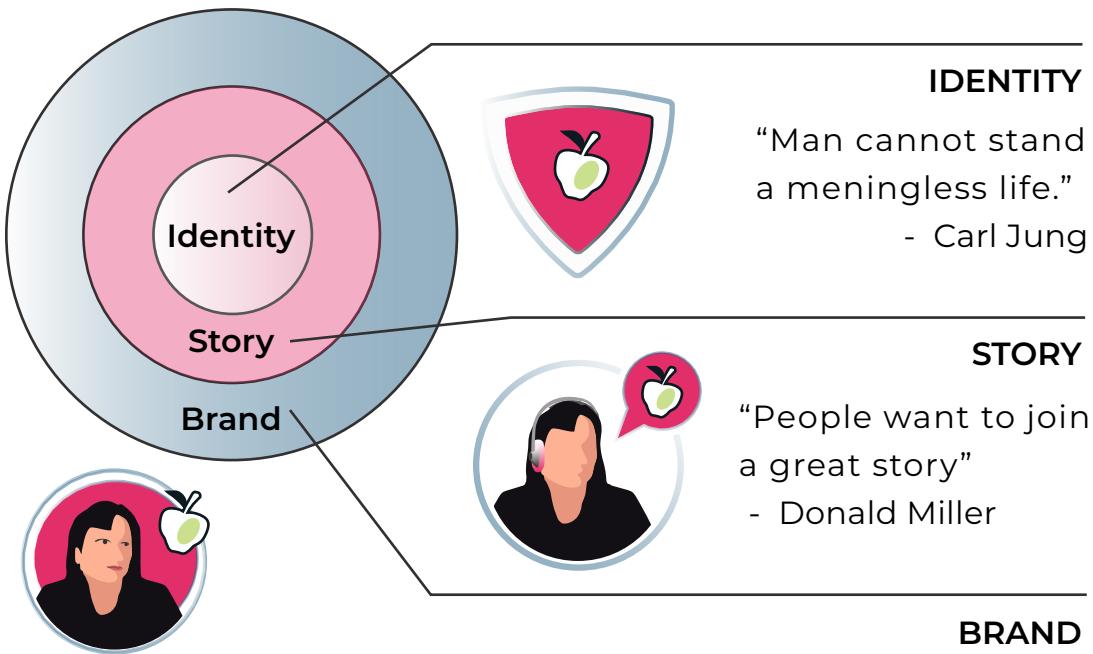
- Robert McKee



STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS STORY

1. The center of your core story is **identity**: who you are as a company. Everything else needs to base on that. Use the Identity prism tool to find your company's identity. The link to the article introducing the Identity prism tool is <https://tietojenkasittely.lapinamk.fi/MyStory/CompanyStory/companysidentity.html>
2. Craft your **story** around your identity. It is how you differentiate yourself from competitors. An authentic and personal core story is a unique story that no one can copy.
3. Build your **brand** around your story. The brand is your customers' perception of your company and how customers see and experience your story and identity. It tells what kind of business you run. It holds much more than a logo and a website.

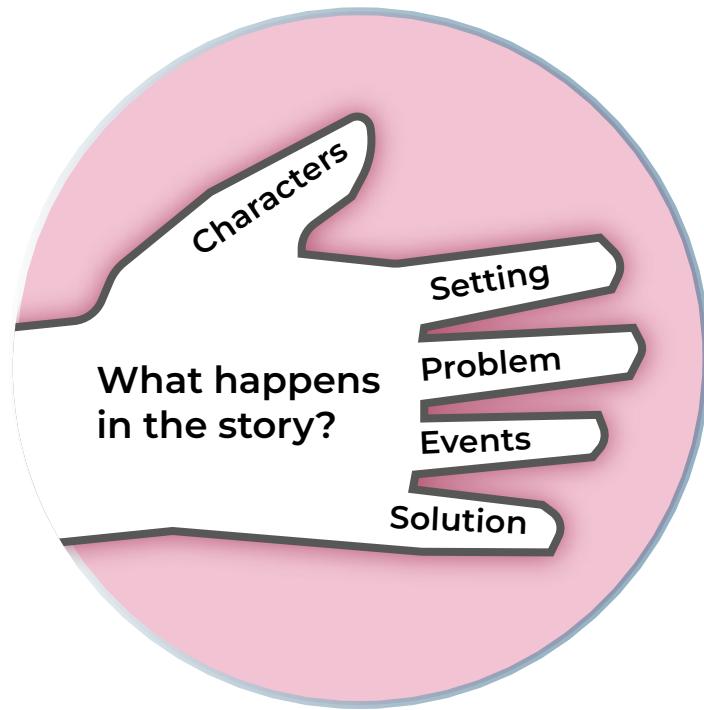
AUTHENTIC & PERSONAL



"Question 1: What are the stories that define us in light of our customer, employees, and shareholders?"

"Question 2: Are these the stories we want to tell and have others tell about us?"
- John Kotter

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF A STORY



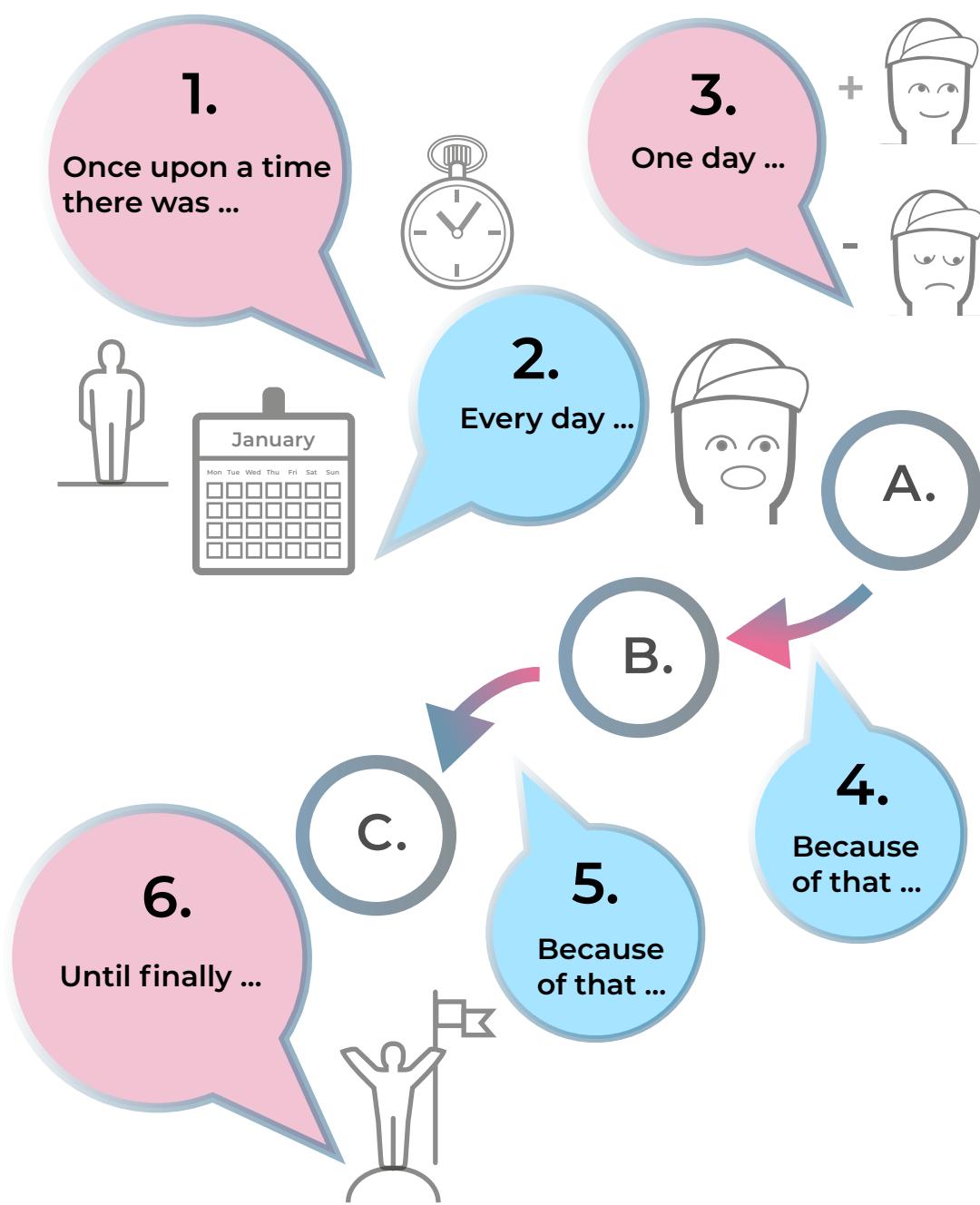
"Once upon a time..." is a standard story beginning. You introduce the characters, setting, and time of the story. Who are they? Where are they? When is the story taking place?

"Every day..." means a typical day in the life of the characters. What is life like every day?

"One day..." something changes the balance of the characters' life. The change can be either positive or negative.

"Because of that..." explains the series of events. Do the characters pursue some goal? Are there obstacles?

"Until finally..." – describes the climax of the story. The characters reach the end of their pursuit. You reveal the meaning of the whole story.



Include a negative element in your business story. In the YouTube video “Overcoming Negaphobia: Embrace the Negative Aspects of Your Story,” Robert McKee explains the importance of a negative component in a business story.

The link to the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/lOmjFKTHI-M?t=15>

ARCHETYPAL STORY PLOTS FOR BUSINESS



Underdog

The main character has a big obstacle to overcome.



Rags to riches or riches to rags

a poor and derelict character gains something they lack (money, power, love), loses it, and then wins it back again.



Quest

Somebody is searching for something powerful.



Voyage and return

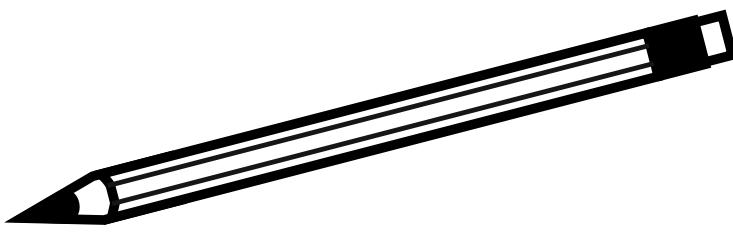
Journey to some foreign place and back.



Rebirth

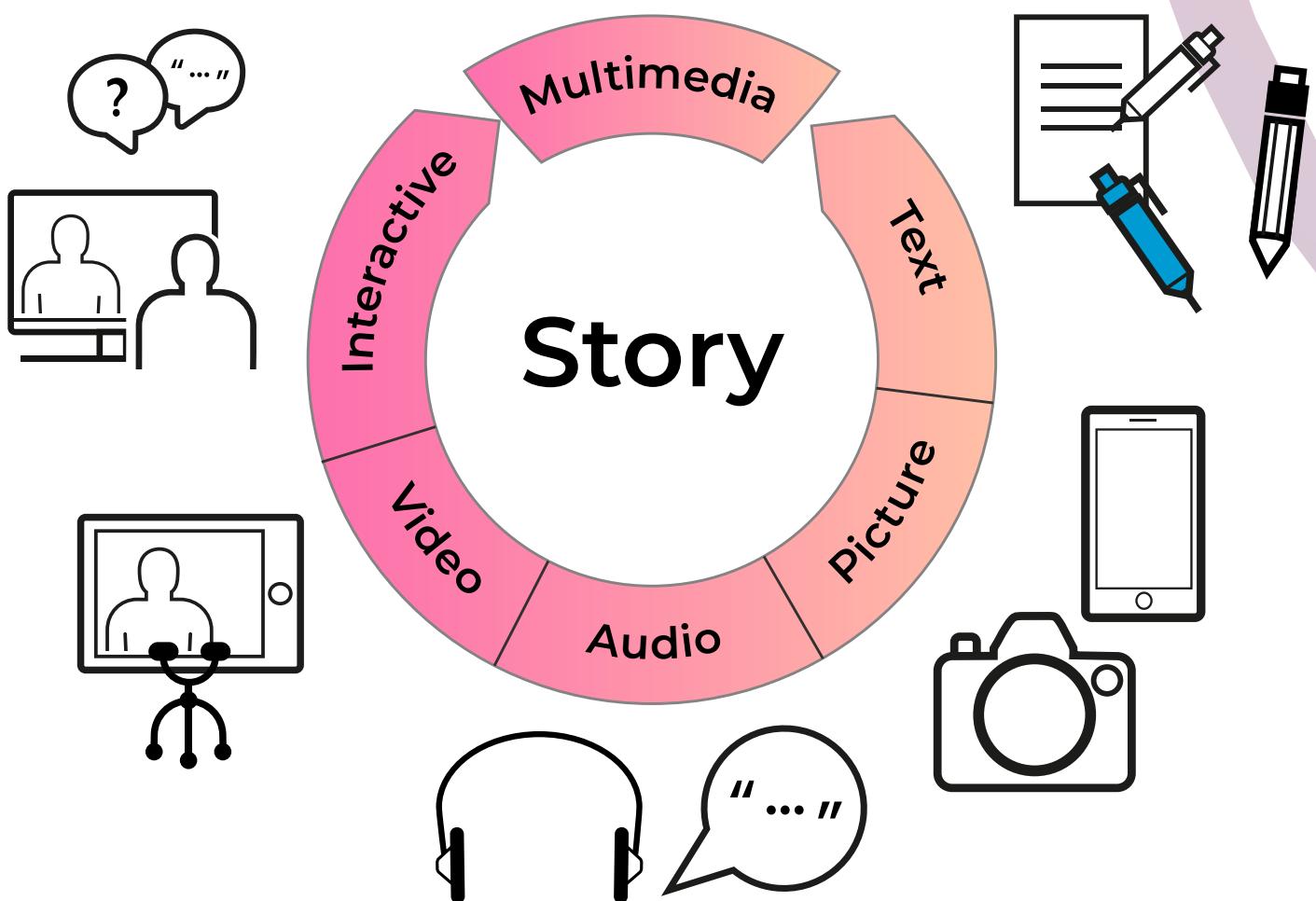
Something is completely ruined and in ashes, but then something new and exciting rises from the ashes.

A story can have one or more of these archetypal plots.



Once you have written your story and you are happy with it, continue shaping it into shareable form.

Consider the platform where you want to publish. Video is a complicated way to tell a story. Is video the best option for you? Besides video, there are other options, for example text, images and multimedia. Consider also how you can share your story in social media.



EXAMPLES

Even few words are enough to tell a powerful story:

“Baby shoes for sale. Never worn.”

- Hemingway

Image combined with a few sentences is a personal and convincing way to attract customers. Photo is a powerful way to tell a story; with text, you can imagine the situation. For example, see the Michelin advertisement “Michelin. Because so much is riding on your tires.”

MICHELIN. BECAUSE SO MUCH IS RIDING ON YOUR TIRES.

At Michelin, we are guided by a single overriding concept: tires are as far as we are concerned the most important piece of equipment you can put on your car. Therefore, making the best tires possible, regardless of cost, has become an obsession with us. That is why we make our own steel for our steel-belted radials. Why each tire model is so long in the development stage. And even longer in the testing and manufacturing stages. That is also why Michelin's perform as well as they perform. And last as long as they last. And of course, why they cost more today.

Though you may find as many Michelin buyers do, they end up costing less to own.

MICHELIN

THE STORY IN A VIDEO FORMAT



IDEATION

Before media production, answer these questions:

1. What is the objective?
2. What is the target group?
3. What is the main message in one sentence?
4. What is the simple story, point of view and style?
5. Which medium communicates the story best?
6. What is the key image / sound/ sentence that sums up the message?
7. How long will the end product be used?
8. How long is it?
9. How is it distributed?
10. What different versions are needed?
11. Who will do it?
12. What is the schedule?
13. What is the budget?
14. How is the production process and approvals organized?

These questions help crystallize what you are trying to do and why. It can take much time to find answers.

TREATMENT

When you find an idea for your video, test it first. A treatment (or synopsis) presents the story idea of your video before writing an entire script. The treatment highlights essential information about your film, including title, logline, story summary, and character descriptions.

SCRIPT

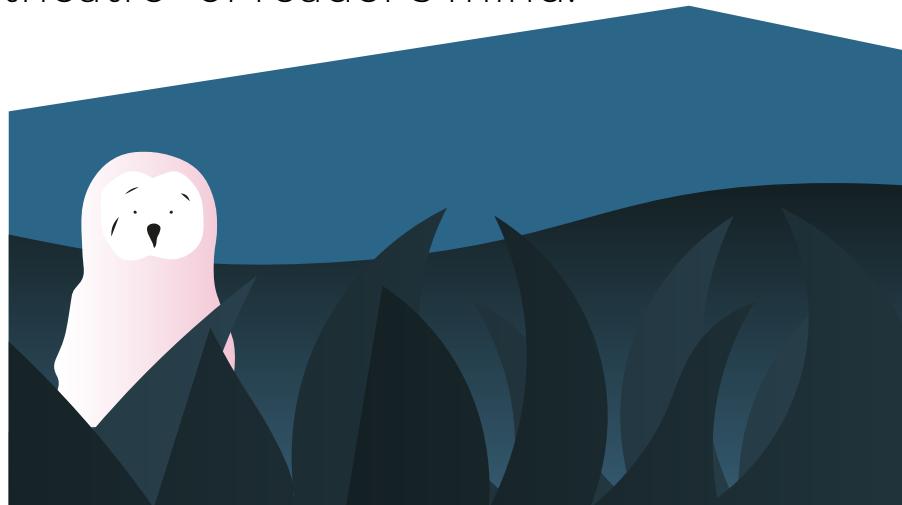
A script helps you to describe a dialogue between characters, situations, and actions:

“Show, don’t tell.”

Write only what we see and hear, mainly actions.

Write in short precise sentences, using evocative words.

Try to create the film in the “movie theatre” of reader’s mind.



A few examples of a script:

1. A detailed description of every image and sound.

Int. Andrew's practice room - a few hours later 12

Andrew practices like mad, trying to nail a double-time swing. To his left a digital METRONOME blinks. The time set: 380. Andrew stops. Resets the metronome to 400. Can't keep up at all now. Struggling, seating, hands blistering, when --

CRAACK. Andrew's right drumstick SNAPS IN HALF.

He stops. Spent. Looks at his hand, sweating and throbbing from the blisters.

Looks back at the metronome. Still beeping away. He turns it off.

Glances up ahead at the poster -- of BUDDY RICH hunched over a drum.

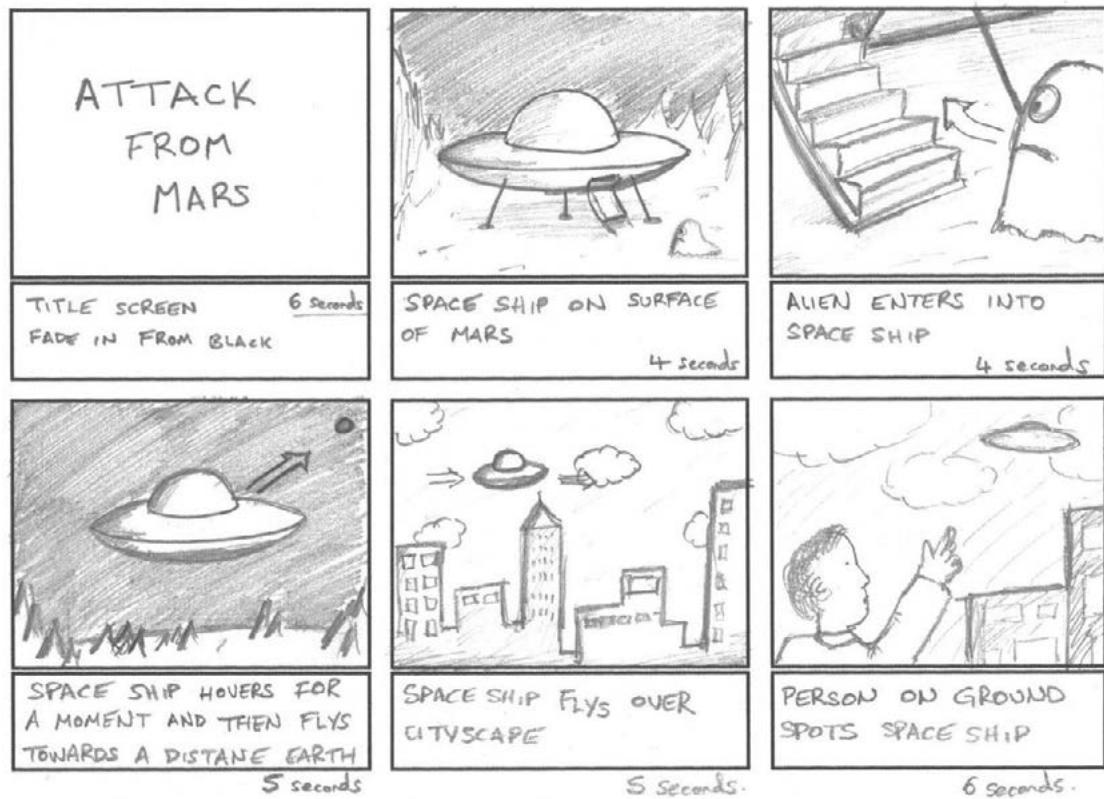
(Source: Chazelle, "Whiplash.")

2. A two-column script for planning both video and audio.

	Video	Audio
1	[What we're seeing]	[What we're hearing]
2 00:00	GFX: title animates on	MUSIC: energetic music background(plays throughout)
3 00:07	Single shot of JAY, straight-to-cam GFX: logo in top right (stays throughout)	JAY: THANK YOU FOR JOINING ME TODAY.
4 00:10	(cont.) L3 GFX bottom left: Jay Jones United Methodist Communications	(cont.) MY NAME IS JAY JONES, AND I'M HERE TO HELP YOU WRITE YOUR VIDEO SCRIPT. SFX: gong sounds after Jay's line

(Source: Price, "Behind every good video is a script.")

STORYBOARD



(Source: Pollyzoom. "Storyboards and Animatics.")

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STORY PRODUCTION

If you want to learn more about writing scripts, you may benefit from a free online course from the University of Anglia. The course explores the key concepts and fundamental principles involved in the process of screenwriting.

The University of Anglia. "An Introduction to Screenwriting." FutureLearn (social learning platform). <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/screenwriting>

Kit Scenarist is a useful and free app for creating scripts. It follows international standards in the field of film production.

Kit Scenarist. Simple and powerful application for creating screenplays. <https://kitscenarist.ru/en/index.html>

"A good story is not enough.
You need to tell it well."



REFERENCES

Chazelle, D. 2013. Whiplash. [SellingYourScreenplay.com](http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/wp-content/uploads/screenplay/scripts/Whiplash.pdf). Accessed September 22, 2022. <http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/wp-content/uploads/screenplay/scripts/Whiplash.pdf>

Carr, S. 2021. "How Many Ads Do We See A Day in 2022?" Lunio. February 15, 2021. Accessed May 19, 2022. <https://lunio.ai/blog/strategy/how-many-ads-do-we-see-a-day/>

Enrico, R. 2016. "5 Storytelling Archetypes and How to Use Them in Marketing." Piktochart. Last Modified December 6, 2021. Accessed on 19.9.2022 <https://piktochart.com/blog/storytelling-archetypes-marketing/>

Haase, A. 2021. How to craft a story for your business and write a script to tell it in a video? Workshop of the MyStory – along the Northern Lights Route project. May 11, 2021.

MasterClass. "Story Archetypes: How to Recognize the 7 Basic Plots." Last modified September 2, 2022. Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/a-guide-to-story-archetypes#4fUTBlaYGWL1eGeFthC8YI>

MasterClass. "How to write a film treatment in 6 steps." Last modified September 3, 2021. Accessed September 19, 2022 <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-film-treatment-in-6-steps>

McKee, R. "Overcoming Negaphobia: Embrace the Negative Aspects of Your Story" YouTube. September 10, 2018. <https://youtu.be/lOmjFKTHl-M>

Michelin Ad. "Michelin. Because so much is riding on your tires." Google Images. 1985.

Pollyzoom. "Storyboards and Animatics." Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://www.pollyzoom.com/storyboards.html>

Price, K. "Behind every good video is a script." ResourceUMC. Accessed September 22, 2022. <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/behind-every-good-video-is-a-script>