

MCLELLAN WRITING TEAM STORYTELLING SAMPLES SCORING RUBRIC

Criteria for Story	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)	SCORE
Emotional response: - Does this story capture interest with a meaningful/unexpected theme? - Does this story stimulate the imagination? - Does this story trigger a mental calm/adrenaline rush/other raw emotion?	Powerful — creates a universally emotional response, a “raw” reaction. Feels like an “escape,” like reading for pleasure. Triggers imagination in unique ways.	Strong — creates a clear emotional response, uplifts or excites the reader, stimulates the reader’s imagination.	Fair — creates minimal emotional response in the reader, nothing unexpected or surprising, or difficult to follow.	Poor — does not evoke any emotional response in the reader, whether positive or negative.	
Motivation: - Is this story one that will encourage new thinking/ action/perspectives/etc.? - Does this story drive the reader to take action?	Powerful — inspiration for defined audience, written to promote action, interest and curiosity. Reader feels a proactive desire to take action and learn more. Reader is nurtured down the marketing funnel.	Strong — some inspiration for the audience, written to encourage action, interest and curiosity. Reader feels a desire to take action or learn more.	Minimal — little inspiration for the audience, no drive to help the reader learn more or examine behavior, no way to encourage curiosity. Reader feels a small desire to take action, but isn’t motivated.	Poor — no inspiration for the audience, no lead nurturing, no language crafted to spark curiosity. Reader feels no desire to take action.	
Connection: - Is this story one that will be remembered by the reader long term? - Will the reader feel seen/heard by this story or otherwise identify with this story?	Powerful — universally appealing while clearly directed to the defined audience, memorable highlights and multiple ways for the audience to get invested in the narrative. Reader will feel that the story is	Strong — appealing, directed to the defined audience, memorable, at least one way for the audience to get invested in the narrative. Reader will feel seen and understood, drawn into the story at a personal level.	Minimal — lack of appeal, poorly directed to the defined audience, no way for the audience to get invested in the narrative. Story is difficult for the reader to relate to or identify with.	Poor —offensive, not directed to the defined audience, no memorable highlights and/or difficult to follow. Reader cannot relate to/identify with the story.	

	addressing them directly, on a personal level.				
Story value: - Does this story provide guidance/education? - Does this story empower the reader – are they in a better place having read this story? - Does this story deliver upon its promise?	Highly valuable — teaches, informs and illuminates the subject for the reader in a memorable, appropriate way. Reader understands they are better off having read this story, with insight they need to inform their future decision-making.	Valuable — provides timely, specific education and information. Reader finishes the piece having gained new knowledge to support their future decision-making.	Fairly valuable — provides some kind of educational information, but not specific or timely. Reader is left wanting more, not having enough to support their future decision-making.	Not valuable —provides no guidance or relevant information. Reader left wondering what the point of the piece was.	
Story credibility: - Is this story (and are the facts included in the story) accurate? - Does this story demonstrate our clients' thought leadership?	Extremely credible — technology and solutions are explained accurately, no missing and outdated sources, client's brand presented as most knowledgeable/ experienced/expert resource.	Credible — technology and solutions are explained accurately, no missing sources, minimal outdated sources, client's brand is presented on par to that of other industry leaders.	Fairly credible — technology and solutions explanations include holes or gaps in information, minimal missing or outdated sources, client's brand is presented as proficient and knowledgeable but not amongst the industry leaders.	Not credible — technology and solutions explanations include inaccuracies, no sources, no thought leadership present.	
Narrative devices: - Does this story employ symbolism/imagery? - Does this story use the element of surprise? - Does this story use interesting word choice and language in each section – especially headings and CTAs?	Outstanding — impactful headline, engaging opening, strong story flow. The customer challenge, client solution, and benefits are all correctly identified, clearly laid out and supported by relevant	Well done — good headline (all components included), nice story flow. The customer challenge, client solution, and results are all laid out clearly and correctly. Data and quotes selected support story content.	Fair — headline not very engaging and/or quotes/data points selected were relevant but not the strongest selections to back up claims/add color to the story.	Poor — headline is not engaging and/or does not include all components, quotes/data selected do not serve the story. Customer challenge/client solution/results are	

	data and quotes that also add some color to the story. Exemplifies “enterprise-class creativity.”			unclear and/or incorrectly identified.	
Basic writing skills: - Does this story use correct spelling/punctuation/grammar? - Is this story told simply and concisely? - Does this story have a well-organized and clear structure?	Extremely well-written — no misspellings, no errant punctuation marks, proper grammar, clear/concise wording and organization, structure that encourages the audience to keep reading.	Thoroughly well-written — no egregious spelling/punctuation/grammatical errors, limited wordiness or convolutedness, content organized into logical sections that build upon each other.	Well-written — minimal spelling/punctuation/grammatical errors, few instances of wordiness or convolutedness, content roughly organized into sections but without a logical flow.	Poorly written — numerous spelling/punctuation/grammatical errors, many overly wordy or convoluted sentences, poor structure and flow.	