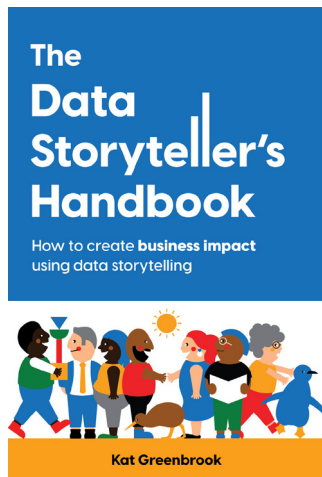




Templates + Prompts

How to use this file

This file contains the templates introduced and explained in *The Data Storyteller's Handbook*, along with AI prompts to help you think through how to complete them. The templates can be used independently of the prompts; **you don't need to use AI**. You can see an example of how these have been used at roguepenguin.co.nz/book/downloads.

These prompts assume your data analysis is already done, and work best when you're familiar with the data storytelling process covered in the handbook. **They are designed to complement your thinking, not replace it.** The quality of what you get out depends on the quality of what you put in. Spend time on the inputs. Treat what comes back as a starting point, not the answer.

The prompts are intended to be used in order. Each prompt produces an output, and many of these become inputs for later prompts. When completed digitally, inputs and outputs used in more than one prompt will update together. Edit each output until it's right before moving on. Pasting your answers into each prompt keeps the AI working from your thinking. It also means each prompt can be run independently if you already have the information. **You should feel some friction as part of the data storytelling process, because your judgement is required.**

Caution when using these prompts

AI can produce confident-sounding suggestions that are wrong, not right for your audience, or discriminatory. Check the maths. Check the assumptions. Check the wording. Only you are responsible for what you share. Don't enter confidential, personal, or sensitive information into AI tools, and check your organisation's guidance on AI use.



The Business

Before you can tell a data story, you need to understand why you're telling it. This section is about the work behind the data.

The **Goal Hierarchy** helps you discover the organisational context that you can use in your data storytelling.

The **PGAI Framework** turns your *Goal Hierarchy* into a short narrative about your work.

Each template in this section has a matching AI prompt to help you think through how to complete it.

Both templates are explained in *The Data Storyteller's Handbook, Chapter 3*.

Goal Hierarchy Template

Wider Goal:

Wider Actions:

Wide Goal:

Wide Actions:

Your Goal:

Your Action:

Other Actions:

Start Here

Goal Hierarchy Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Action (What are you working on?)

Goal (What is your work trying to achieve?)

Wider Goals and Actions (What are the bigger outcomes your goal contributes to? Summarise the wide and wider goals and actions from the Goal Hierarchy Template)

Goal Hierarchy Prompt

I want to expand my thinking about a project I'm working on. Here's some context about me and my organisation. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. My action: **[paste Action]**. My goal: **[paste Goal]**. My wider goals and the actions: **[paste Wider Goals and Actions]**. Suggest three other actions that would also help achieve my goal, two alternative bigger outcomes my goal could contribute to, and one even broader outcome that sits above those. For each suggestion, give a brief reason it fits my context. Don't repeat what I've already written. Then give me two clearly labelled summaries to carry forward. Label the first "Other Actions" – the three other actions you suggested. Label the second "Organisational Impact" – a short summary of the bigger outcomes my work contributes to, combining my wider goals with the alternative bigger outcomes and broader outcome you suggested. Write this summary as a plain statement of the outcomes themselves. Don't mention my action or my goal in it, and don't include the means by which the outcomes are achieved – an outcome describes a state of the world, and anything that describes work being done belongs elsewhere. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each suggestion to two or three sentences, and keep the two labelled summaries brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Other Actions (Paste the "Other Actions" AI summary and make any necessary changes. This information isn't used in future prompts but can help make you aware of others also working towards your goal)

Organisational Impact (Paste the "Organisational Impact" AI summary and edit it before moving on. Keep only the outcomes you're confident your work genuinely contributes to – later prompts will treat everything here as fact)

PGAI Template

Problem What is the organisation struggling with?

Problems go hand-in-hand with opportunities (which help to set goals). Use your below goal to help identify your organisation's problem.

Goal What outcome would minimise the problem?

Enter Your Goal from the Goal Hierarchy Template.

Action What could/did the organisation do to achieve the goal?

Enter Your Action from the Goal Hierarchy Template.

What are you using data storytelling for?

☐ To influence this action ☐ To share this action

Impact What organisational value could/did the action create?

Summarise the Wide and Wider Goals/Actions from the Goal Hierarchy Template.

PGAI Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Action (What are you working on?)

Goal (What is your work trying to achieve?)

Organisational Impact (Output of the Goal Hierarchy prompt: the bigger organisational outcomes your goal contributes to. If you haven't used this prompt, enter the Impact from your PGAI Template)

Problem (This is reverse-engineered from your goal – what’s not working that your goal would address. Leave this blank if you’re not sure how to articulate it)

PGAI Prompt

Here’s some context about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The action I’m taking: **[paste Action]**. The goal it’s trying to achieve: **[paste Goal]**. The impact my work could create: **[paste Organisational Impact]**. The problem my organisation is struggling with: **[paste Problem, or leave blank]**. I want to use the PGAI framework to write a story about my work. PGAI stands for Problem, Goal, Action, Impact. The framework follows this narrative structure: “Our organisation is struggling with this [insert the above PROBLEM]. But I’m doing this [insert the above ACTION] to help us achieve this [insert the above GOAL]. As a result of my work, I hope to add value to our organisation through this [insert the above organisational IMPACT].” If I’ve left the problem blank or written that I’m unsure, reverse-engineer it from my goal – articulate what my organisation must be struggling with for my goal to be the right outcome to pursue. Then write two versions of the PGAI narrative using these four pieces. The two versions must differ in tone or emphasis. Write one version to influence a decision and one version to share progress on the work. Don’t add information I haven’t given you, and don’t restate the four pieces back at me – translate them into a flowing narrative. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no headers, no subpoints. Keep each version to three or four sentences.

After running this prompt, note down:

Work Story (Paste the version that matches your selection on the PGAI Template – influence or share – and make any necessary changes. This will be used in the later Data Story prompt, but it can also be used as your elevator pitch to help you talk about what you do)



The Audience

A data story is created for someone else. This section is about understanding the people you're communicating with. This file works through one audience at a time. To create a data story for a second audience, save a copy of the file first.

The **Stakeholder Matrix** maps the people involved in or affected by your work and helps you decide which audiences to focus on. It will give you several priority audiences. Choosing which one to focus on is your decision.

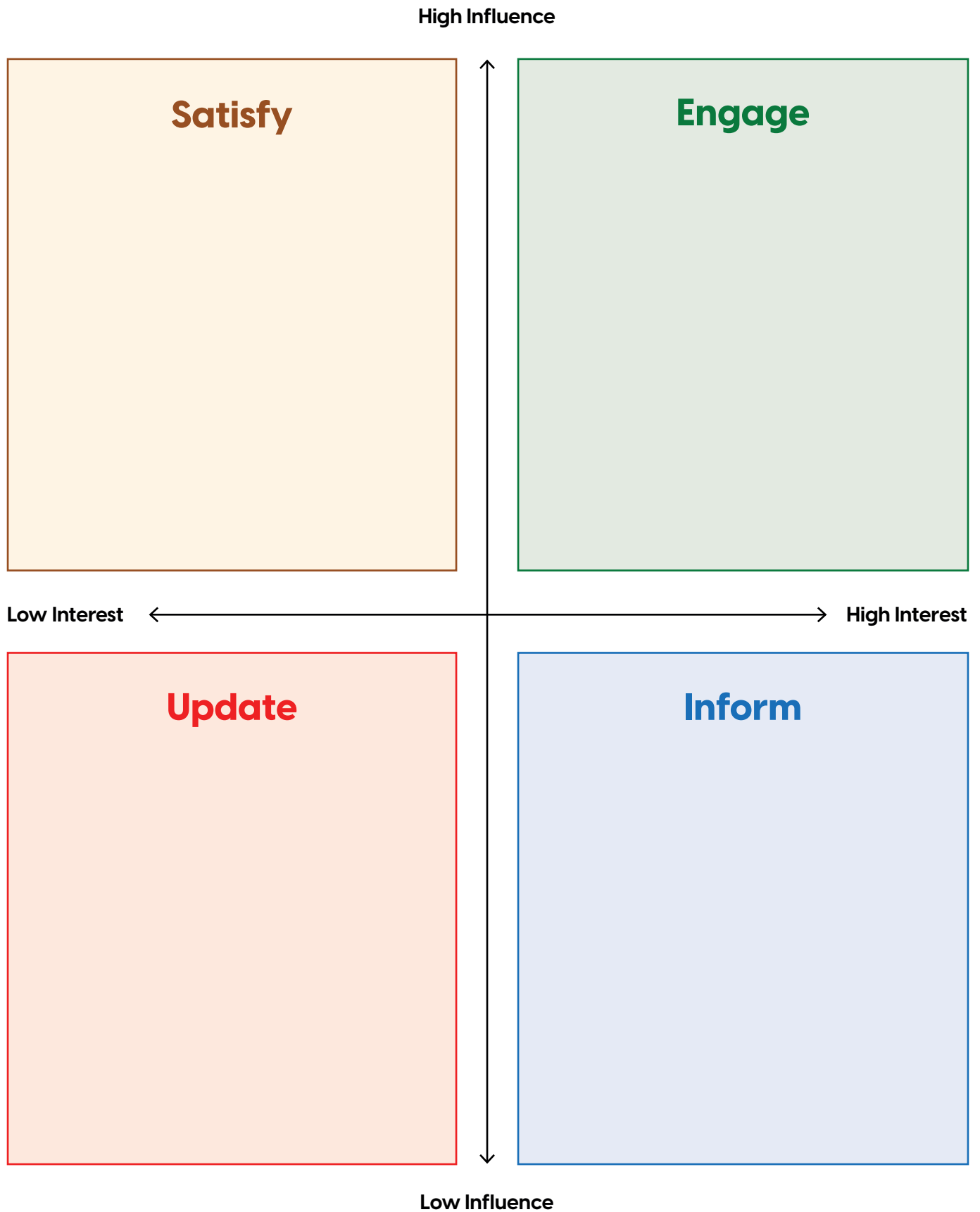
User Stories go deeper on a specific audience, helping you understand what would motivate them to engage with your work.

Empathy Spectrums then calibrate how you'll communicate with that audience.

The *Stakeholder Matrix* and *Empathy Spectrums* each have a template and matching AI prompt. *User Stories* has a prompt only.

All three are covered in *The Data Storyteller's Handbook, Chapter 4*.

Stakeholder Matrix Template



Stakeholder Matrix Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Goal (What is your work trying to achieve?)

Stakeholders (List the people involved in or affected by this work – their roles and their relationship to your work)

Stakeholder Matrix Prompt

Here's some context about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The goal I'm trying to achieve: **[paste Goal]**. The stakeholders involved in or affected by this work: **[paste Stakeholders]**. I want to map these stakeholders by their influence over my project and their interest in it, so I can prioritise who to communicate with and how. Influence means how much power they have to start, stop, or shape the work. Interest means how much they care about or are affected by it. For each stakeholder, suggest whether their influence is high or low and whether their interest is high or low, name the quadrant they fall into, and explain why. Assess influence and interest as two separate things. Seniority often signals influence, but it doesn't tell you about interest – a stakeholder can have high influence over this work while having little personal interest in it, or strong interest despite limited influence. Based on where each falls, tell me how to approach them: engage closely with high influence and high interest (Engage), keep high influence and low interest satisfied (Satisfy), keep low influence and high interest informed as potential allies (Inform), and put minimal effort into low influence and low interest (Update). Where you think a low-interest group could be moved to higher interest with the right communication, say so. Don't make assumptions beyond what I've told you – flag anything you're guessing at. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Priority Audiences" – the stakeholders you've placed in the Engage, Satisfy, or Inform quadrants (the ones I should be communicating with), with a one-line note on each. If you flagged any Update stakeholders as movable to higher interest, include them here with a note saying so. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each stakeholder to two or three sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Priority Audiences (Paste the "Priority Audiences" AI summary and make any necessary changes. This information isn't pasted into later prompts – use it to choose which audience you want to focus on)

User Story Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Audience (Describe your audience – their role, their relationship to your work, what they care about, anything you know about how they prefer to receive information. If you've run the Stakeholder Matrix prompt, choose one of your Priority Audiences and expand on what you know about them)

Desired Outcome (What you want this audience to do, understand, decide, or feel as a result of your communication?)

User Story Prompt

I want to better understand what motivates a specific audience to engage with my topic. Here's some context about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The audience I'm focused on: **[paste Audience]**. What I want this audience to do, understand, decide, or feel as a result of my communication: **[paste Desired Outcome]**. Help me build a user story for this audience (i.e. from their perspective) in the form "As a [insert above audience], I want [to do/know/access something], so that [outcome based on audience's motivation]". Suggest two versions of the "so that". One should end in a self-interested outcome – something the audience or their organisation gains. This includes external rewards (targets hit, funding secured, recognition received), internal rewards (feeling confident, sleeping at night, personal satisfaction), and organisational rewards (revenue retained, reputation strengthened, risk reduced). The other should end in a beyond-self outcome – something good happening for someone or something outside the audience and their organisation, that the audience would still want even if it returned no benefit to themselves or their organisation. The outcome must hold even if the customer leaves, the project fails commercially, the person or organisation involved walks away, the work fails, or no one ever knows the audience cared. Examples: a person being treated with dignity, a wrong being acknowledged, a community being better off, a future generation being protected. For each version, briefly explain why this audience might be driven by that outcome. Don't make assumptions beyond what I've told you – flag anything you're guessing at. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Audience Motivation" – a brief note on what motivates this audience to engage with my work, drawing on both versions of the user story. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each version to two or three sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Audience Motivation (Paste the "Audience Motivation" AI summary and make any necessary changes)

Empathy Spectrums Template

Your audience:

How well do they understand your topic?

	<i>Novice</i>		<i>Expert</i>
Audience			
You			

How do they prefer to be communicated with about this?

	<i>Summary</i>		<i>Detail</i>
Audience			
You			

How are they likely to react to your message?

	<i>Spontaneous (gut)</i>		<i>Thoughtful (facts)</i>
Audience			
You			

How interested are they to receive your information?

	<i>Low interest</i>		<i>High interest</i>
Audience			
You			

Empathy Spectrums Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Audience (Describe your audience – their role, their relationship to your work, what they care about, anything you know about how they prefer to receive information. If you've run the Stakeholder Matrix prompt, choose one of your Priority Audiences and expand on what you know about them)

Desired Outcome (What you want this audience to do, understand, decide, or feel as a result of your communication?)

Your Position (Where do you sit on each of the four spectrums? Leave blank if you sit where most data communicators do – toward the expert, detail, thoughtful, and high interest ends)

Empathy Spectrums Prompt

I'm communicating with a specific audience about my work and want to understand how to calibrate my message to them. Here's some context about my organisation. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The audience I'm focused on: **[paste Audience]**. What I want this audience to do, understand, decide, or feel as a result of my communication: **[paste Desired Outcome]**. Where I sit on each spectrum: **[paste Your Position, or leave blank]**. If I've left this blank, assume I sit toward the expert, detail, thoughtful, and high interest end of each spectrum. Suggest where this audience probably sits on each of these spectrums, and why, and compare their position with mine. The first spectrum is how well they understand the topic, from novice to expert. The second is how interested they are in receiving the information, from low to high – which can differ from their interest in the work itself. The third is how they're likely to react to your message, from spontaneous (an instinctive, emotional first response) to thoughtful (weighing facts and reasoning before responding). This spectrum is about the nature of their reaction, not their speed or decisiveness – someone who is quick and action-oriented can still react thoughtfully. The fourth is how they prefer to be communicated with, from summary to detail. Then suggest two specific things I should adjust in my communication. Each adjustment must be tied to a gap between my position and the audience's position on a specific spectrum, and the adjustment must be one that would change if the gap closed or ran the other way. Don't give me generic advice about communicating with this type of person – only adjustments that follow from the gaps between our positions on these four spectrums. Don't make assumptions beyond what I've told you – flag anything you're guessing at. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Communication Profile" – a brief note on how I should communicate with this audience, built from the two adjustments you suggested above and anything else that follows from the gaps between our positions. This summary will be used later without any explanation of the four spectrums, so write it as standalone communication guidance – describe what to do, and don't reference the spectrums, their names, or where either of us sits on them. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each adjustment to two or three sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Communication Profile (Paste the "Communication Profile" AI summary and make any necessary changes to this and your Empathy Spectrums template)



The Data (Canvas)

This section is where you gather the building blocks you'll need for a data story.

The **Time Data Story Canvas** helps you organise the building blocks for a story about change (how a data metric's measurements changed between two points in time).

The **Character Data Story Canvas** is for a story about difference (how a data metric's measurements compares between two characters at the same point in time).

Choose the canvas that matches your data.

The first half of each canvas comes directly from your analysis: the data metric, the character, the measurements, and the change or difference between them. There are no prompts for these blocks because they're your findings.

The five prompts in this section (Data Impact, Reason, Unknowns, Reaction, Context) pick up where your interpretation begins, and they're written to work with either canvas.

Both canvases are explained in *The Data Storyteller's Handbook*, Chapter 5.

Time Data Story Canvas

1. Data Metric What Data Metric is changing?	2. Character Whom (or what) does the Data Metric describe?	
3. Times Select two time points when the Data Metric will be measured (to highlight its change).	Time 1	Time 2
4. Data Change Record the Data Metric 's measurements at Times 1 and 2 . Calculate the difference between data measurements (or the Data Metric 's Change).	Data (Time 1)	Data (Time 2)
	Change	
5. Character Change Times + Character + Data Metric + Data Change		
6. Impact How was the Character impacted by the change? ☐ Positively ☐ No change ☐ Negatively		
7. Reason Why did the Character Change happen?		
8. Unknowns What don't you know about the Character Change ?		
9. Reaction How do you respond to the Character Change ?		
What was learned from the Reason ?	What can be done to remove Unknowns ?	What can be done to improve the Impact ?
10. Context What else does your audience need to know to understand the Character Change ?		

Character Data Story Canvas

1. Characters Whom (or what) are you comparing?	Main	Supporting

2. Data Metric What **Data Metric** are you comparing?

3. Time When will the **Data Metric** be measured?

4. Data Difference Record the Data Metric's measurements at the Time . Calculate the difference between data measurements.		
	Difference	

5. Character's Difference Time + Characters + Data Metric + Data Difference

6. Advantage What **Character** is in a better position? ☐ Main ☐ No difference ☐ Supporting

7. Reason Why are the **Characters** different?

8. Unknowns What don't you know about the **Character's Difference**?

9. Reaction How can you respond to the Character's Difference ?		
What was learned from Reason ?	What can be done to remove Unknowns ?	What can be done to improve Advantage ?

10. Context What else does your audience need to know to understand the **Character's Difference**?

Data Impact Prompt

This prompt extends block 6 of the canvas. Block 6 records the impact on the character (Time canvas) or which character holds the advantage (Character canvas). The prompt takes this further, working out what the change/difference means for wider organisational outcomes.

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Organisational Impact (Output of the Goal Hierarchy prompt: the bigger organisational outcomes your goal contributes to. If you haven't used this prompt, enter the Impact from your PGAI Template)

Character Change or Difference (Describe what's changed or what's different – as seen in the data – and how the character was affected. If you've completed a canvas, this is your block 5 sentence plus the block 6 impact/advantage)

Data Impact Prompt

I've identified a change or difference in my data and want to think through what it means for the bigger picture. Here's some context about my organisation. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The wider outcomes my work feeds into: **[paste Organisational Impact]**. The change or difference I've identified in the data: **[paste Character Change or Difference]**. Help me think through how this change or difference affects each of the wider outcomes my work feeds into. For each outcome, is the change or difference positive, negative, or neutral, and why? Don't assume the change or difference is good or bad in itself – that depends entirely on which outcome you're looking at. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Data Impact" – a brief synthesis of how this change or difference affects the bigger picture, drawing on your analysis of each outcome. Keep the summary to the effects on the outcomes themselves – don't include what might have caused the change or difference, what's unknown about it, what should be investigated, or what should be done in response, because I'll work through each of those separately. Where an effect can't be assessed yet, say so and stop there. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each assessment to two or three sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Data Impact (Paste the "Data Impact" AI summary and make any necessary changes. This goes beyond what is captured in the canvas – it looks past the character to the wider outcomes)

Reason Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Character Change or Difference (Describe what's changed or what's different – as seen in the data – and how the character was affected. If you've completed a canvas, this is your block 5 sentence plus the block 6 impact/advantage)

Reasons Considered (Canvas block 7. List any reasons you've already thought of, or leave blank if you're starting from scratch)

Reason Prompt

I've identified a change or difference in my data and want to think through what might have caused it. Here's some context about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The change or difference I've identified in the data: **[paste Character Change or Difference]**. The reasons I've considered so far: **[paste Reasons Considered, or leave blank]**. Suggest three plausible reasons this change or difference might have happened that I haven't already considered. Include at least one reason that has nothing to do with my organisation's actions – something happening in the wider environment, the market or policy landscape, public or customer behaviour, or society – so I'm not only looking at what we did or didn't do. For each reason, briefly explain why it's plausible given my context, and what kind of evidence would help me confirm or rule it out. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Reason" – a brief synthesis of the most plausible reasons for this change or difference, drawing on the three you suggested and anything I had already considered. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each reason to three or four sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Reason (Paste the "Reason" AI summary and make any necessary changes)

Unknowns Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Character Change or Difference (Describe what's changed or what's different – as seen in the data – and how the character was affected. If you've completed a canvas, this is your block 5 sentence plus the block 6 impact/advantage)

Reason (Output of the Reason prompt: The reasons for the above change or difference)

Unknowns Considered (Canvas block 8. List any unknowns you've already noticed about this change or difference, or leave blank if you're starting from scratch)

Unknowns Prompt

I've identified a change or difference in my data and want to think through what I don't know about it. Here's some context about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The change or difference I've identified in the data: **[paste Character Change or Difference]**. The reasons I think might explain this change or difference: **[paste Reason]**. The unknowns I've already considered: **[paste Unknowns Considered, or leave blank]**. Help me identify what else I don't know. Suggest three significant unknowns that could change my understanding of this change or difference if I had the answers, and that I haven't already considered. Express each unknown as an open question I can't currently answer, rather than as a possible explanation stated with uncertainty, and don't turn my reasons into unknowns by adding hedging language to them. At least one should be about the data itself (something my data can't tell me, or measurement limitations I might be overlooking). At least one should be about the people or things behind the data (motivations, experiences, or context that the numbers don't capture). For each unknown, briefly explain why it matters and how I might go about finding out. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Unknowns" – a brief synthesis of the most significant unknowns about this change or difference, drawing on the three you suggested and anything I had already considered. Every item must be an open question, with no suggestion of which answers are more likely. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each unknown to three or four sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Unknowns (Paste the "Unknowns" AI summary and make any necessary changes)

Reaction Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Character Change or Difference (Describe what's changed or what's different – as seen in the data – and how the character was affected. If you've completed a canvas, this is your block 5 sentence plus the block 6 impact/advantage)

Data Impact (Output of the Data Impact prompt: The wider impact of the above character change or difference)

Reason (Output of the Reason prompt: The reasons for the above change or difference)

Unknowns (Output of the Unknowns prompt: Anything you don't know about this change or difference)

Reaction Considered (If you've completed a canvas, copy your three block 9 answers here. Otherwise list any reactions you've already thought of – insights, next steps for unknowns, actions to improve the impact. Leave blank if you're starting from scratch)

Reaction Prompt

*I've worked through the impact, reason, and unknowns of a change or difference in my data, and want to think through how to respond to it. Here's some context about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The change or difference I've identified in the data: **[paste Character Change or Difference]**. The impact: **[paste Data Impact]**. The reason: **[paste Reason]**. The unknowns: **[paste Unknowns]**. The reactions I've already considered: **[paste Reaction Considered, or leave blank]**. Help me think through my reaction by answering three questions. First, what was learned from the reason – what insight emerges when I look at why the change or difference happened? Second, what can be done to remove the unknowns – what next steps in analysis, research, or conversation would help close those gaps? Third, what can be done to improve the impact or advantage – what action could be taken in response to what I've found? For each question, give me a brief answer that draws on what I've shared, and that I haven't already considered. Don't suggest things that go beyond what the impact, reason, and unknowns actually tell us. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Reaction" – a brief synthesis covering the insight, the next steps for unknowns, and the action to improve the impact or advantage. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each answer to two or three sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.*

After running this prompt, note down:

Reaction (Paste the "Reaction" AI summary and make any necessary changes)

Context Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Character Change or Difference (Describe what's changed or what's different – as seen in the data – and how the character was affected. If you've completed a canvas, this is your block 5 sentence plus the block 6 impact/advantage)

Reason (Output of the Reason prompt: The reasons for the above change or difference)

Unknowns (Output of the Unknowns prompt: Anything you don't know about this change or difference)

Data Impact (Output of the Data Impact prompt: The wider impact of the above change or difference)

Audience (Describe your audience – their role, their relationship to your work, what they care about, anything you know about how they prefer to receive information. If you've run the Stakeholder Matrix prompt, choose one of your Priority Audiences and expand on what you know about them)

Context Considered (Canvas block 10. List any context you think your audience needs, or leave blank if you're starting from scratch)

Context Prompt

I've identified a change or difference in my data and want to think through what context my audience needs to understand it. Here's some information about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The change or difference I've identified in the data: **[paste Character Change or Difference]**. The reasons I think explain this change or difference: **[paste Reason]**. The unknowns I've identified about it: **[paste Unknowns]**. What it means for our wider outcomes: **[paste Data Impact]**. I've already worked through these, so treat them as off-limits – any context you suggest must add something beyond them. The audience I'm communicating this to: **[paste Audience]**. The context I've already considered: **[paste Context Considered, or leave blank]**. Suggest three pieces of context this audience needs in order to understand the change or difference properly, that I haven't already considered. Context is information that helps the audience interpret what the numbers mean – not what caused the change or difference, not what's unknown about it, and not what should be done in response. Choose context based on what this specific audience needs. For each piece, briefly explain why this audience needs it and what could go wrong in their understanding if they don't have it. Then give me one clearly labelled summary to carry forward. Label it "Context" – a brief synthesis of the most important context this audience needs, drawing on the three pieces you suggested and anything I had already considered. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no sub-points. Keep each piece of context to three or four sentences, and keep the labelled summary brief.

After running this prompt, note down:

Context (paste the "Context" AI summary and make any necessary changes)



The Data Story

This is where everything comes together. You have your building blocks. You also know who you're talking to and what you want from them. The data story is what turns all of that into your message.

There's no template for this one – just the prompt, which draws on the answers you've already noted down. The more answers you have to customise your prompt, the more helpful and relevant your data story will be.

The structure of a data story is explained in *The Data Storyteller's Handbook*, Chapter 5.

Data Story Prompt

Before using the prompt, answer the following:

Organisation (Where do you work, what kind of organisation is it, what does your team do, and what are you responsible for?)

Work Story (Output of the PGAI template/prompt: How does your work help to solve an organisation problem and what kind of impact does it create? If you haven't used this prompt, briefly describe what you're working on and what it's trying to achieve)

Character Change or Difference (Describe what's changed or what's different – as seen in the data – and how the character was affected. If you've completed a canvas, this is your block 5 sentence plus the block 6 impact/advantage)

Data Impact (Output of the Data Impact prompt: The wider impact of the above character change or difference)

Reason (Output of the Reason prompt: The reasons for the above change or difference)

Unknowns (Output of the Unknowns prompt: Anything you don't know about this change or difference)

Reaction (Output of the Reaction prompt: List ways you could react to what you're seeing in the data – insights, next steps for unknowns, actions to improve the impact)

Audience (Describe your audience – their role, their relationship to your work, what they care about, anything you know about how they prefer to receive information. If you've run the Stakeholder Matrix prompt, choose one of your Priority Audiences and expand on what you know about them)

Context (Output of the Context prompt: Any context you think your audience needs)

Audience Motivation (Output of the User Story prompt: What motivates your audience to engage with your work?)

Communication Profile (Output of the Empathy Spectrums template/prompt)

Desired Outcome (What you want this audience to do, understand, decide, or feel as a result of your communication?)

Data Story Prompt

*I want to write a data story using the ABT narrative structure – and, but, therefore. The word and strings together information in agreement to establish the first story act. The word but introduces the tension of the second act. The word therefore lands the consequence of the third act. Here's some context about my project. My organisation: **[paste Organisation]**. The story of my work and how it fits into my organisation: **[paste Work Story]**. The change or difference I've identified in the data: **[paste Character Change or Difference]**. Here's what I've worked out about the data. The impact: **[paste Data Impact]**. The reason: **[paste Reason]**. The unknowns: **[paste Unknowns]**. The reaction: **[paste Reaction]**. The audience I'm communicating to: **[paste Audience]**. The context the audience needs: **[paste Context]**. What motivates this audience: **[paste Audience Motivation]**. How to calibrate the message: **[paste Communication Profile]**. What I want them to do, understand, decide, or feel: **[paste Desired Outcome]**. If any of these are blank, work with what I've given you and don't invent what's missing. Suggest two versions of the ABT. The two versions must differ in what they put at the centre of the story – what contrast is introduced by the second act, and what the third act asks for or resolves. They should not be variations on the same underlying narrative. Use the above information as raw material – choose what to include and what to leave out based on what makes the strongest story for this audience. Open with a first act that establishes information in agreement, with no tension in it. Begin the second act with the word but, and begin the third act with the word therefore or so. Each act can be one to three sentences – keep the sentences short and natural, splitting rather than stretching them. Don't begin any other sentence with but, therefore, or so, so the three acts stay clearly marked. Write the response as plain prose. No bullet points, no headers, no sub-points.*

After running this prompt, note down:

Data Story (Paste your preferred version from the AI's response and make any necessary changes)

What's next?

These prompts help you to write a data story. The final step of the data storytelling process (telling the story) is not covered in this file. That step is usually done using visuals, and often faster to do directly than to work through with AI. It may be added to a future version of this file. *The Data Storyteller's Handbook* covers this step in Chapter 6.