
CLIMAX

Find the climax first. Why? It's the best part of the story to hear—which typically means it's the easiest part of the story to write. You can then decide whether to use the story's climax to grab attention or end the story with a bang.

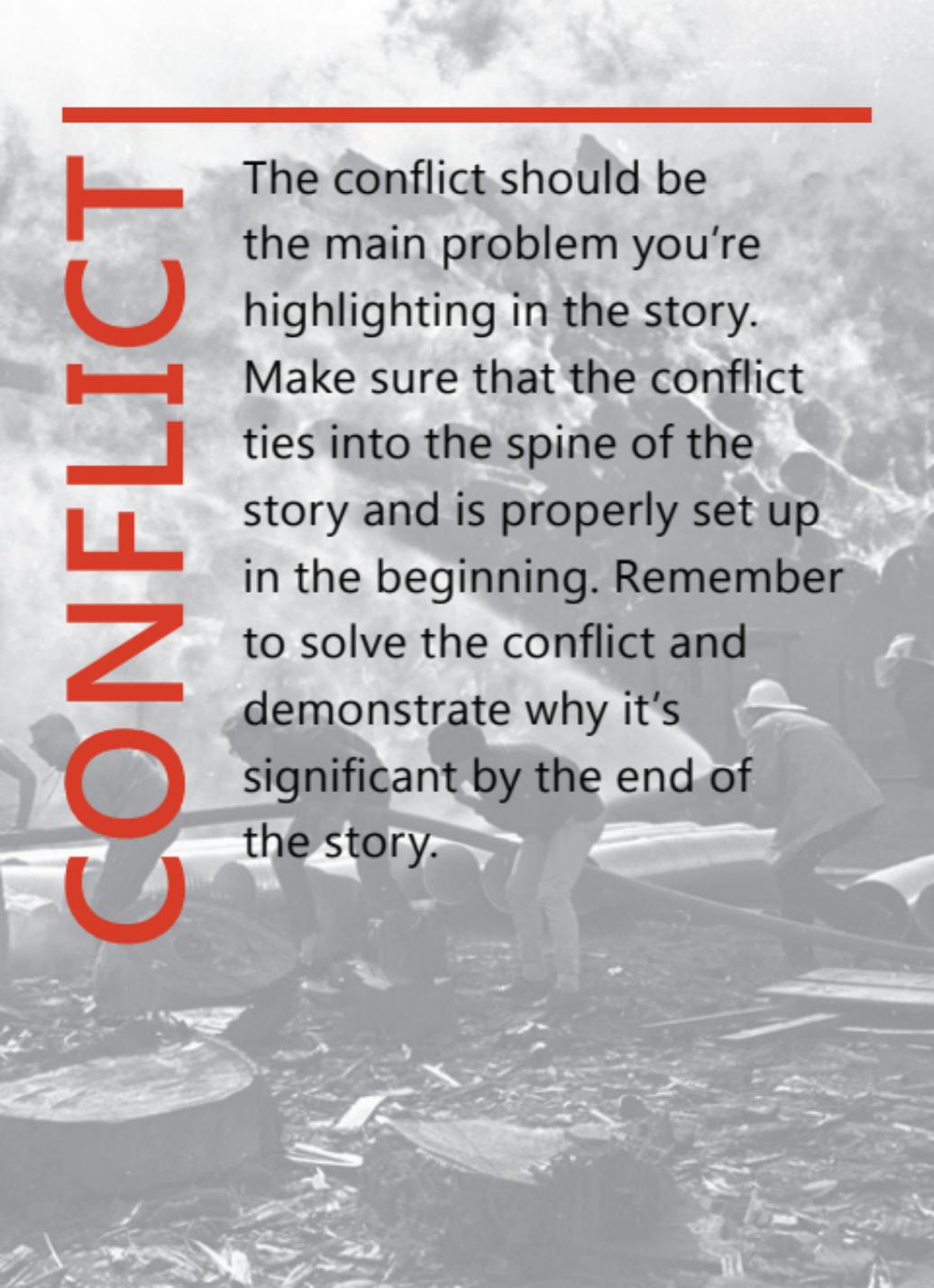


“That’s how stories
happen—with a
turning point, an
unexpected twist.”

- Haruki Murakami



CONFLICT



The conflict should be the main problem you're highlighting in the story. Make sure that the conflict ties into the spine of the story and is properly set up in the beginning. Remember to solve the conflict and demonstrate why it's significant by the end of the story.

**“Happiness is an allegory,
unhappiness a story.”**

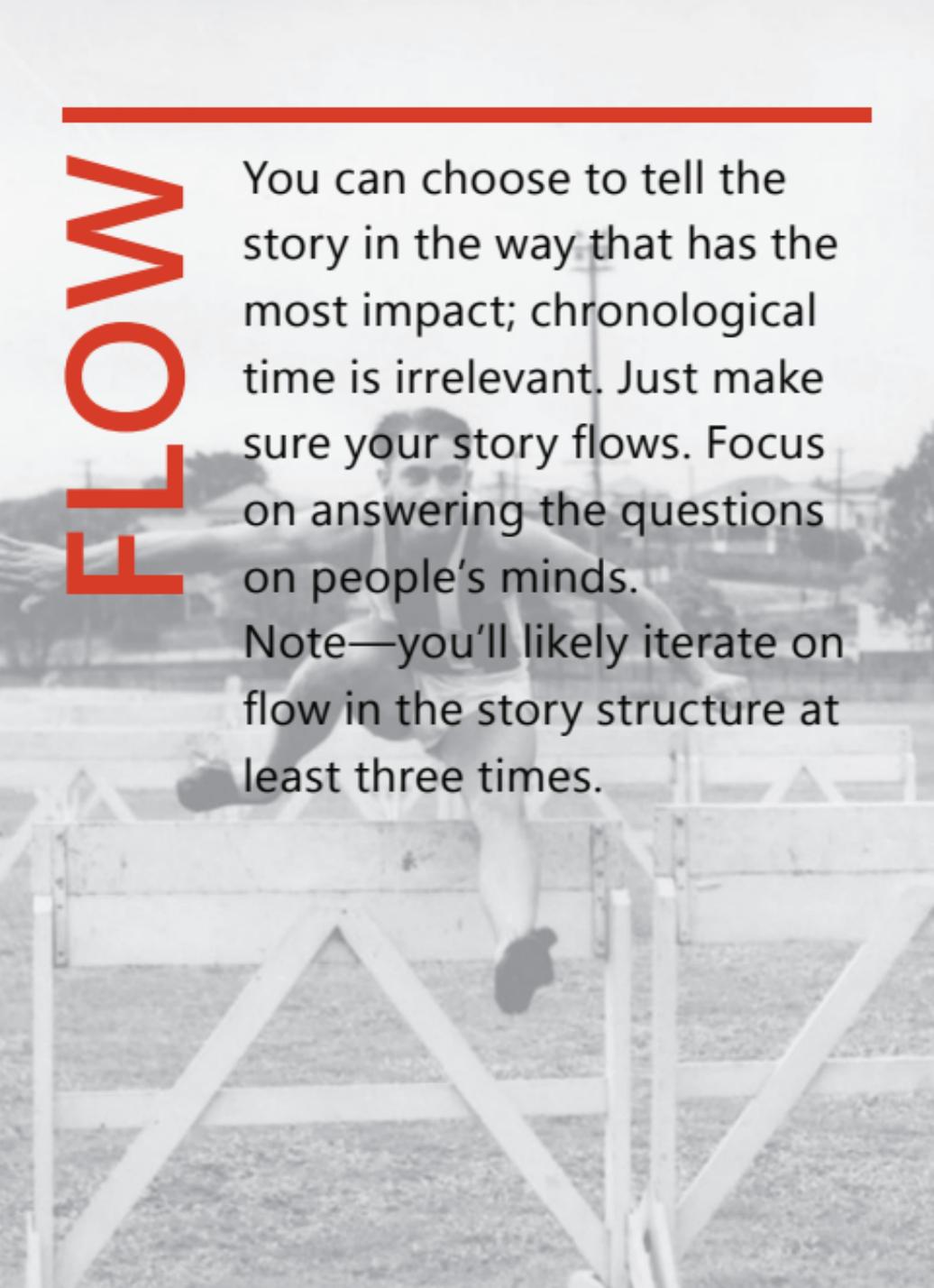
- Leo Tolstoy



FLOW

You can choose to tell the story in the way that has the most impact; chronological time is irrelevant. Just make sure your story flows. Focus on answering the questions on people's minds.

Note—you'll likely iterate on flow in the story structure at least three times.



“Some poems don’t rhyme, and some stories don’t have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what’s going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity.”

- Gilda Radner



A grayscale background image of a stage performance. A red horizontal line is positioned at the top of the page. The word "DELIVERY" is written vertically in large, bold, red capital letters on the left side. The background shows a stage with several performers, including one in a dark dress with arms outstretched, and a crowd of spectators in the background. A sign with the word "KOLADE" is visible in the background.

DELIVERY

Write out the story and read it out loud. Ruthlessly edit your story to take out the stuff that really doesn't matter, even if you fall in love with it. Get to the point quickly, but not without stretching out some detail to build suspense and pacing. Give yourself the time to revise, and practice your delivery. Rehearse until you wouldn't change a single word.

“Ninety-nine percent is in the delivery. If you have the right voice and the right delivery, you’re cocky enough, and you pound down on the punch line, you can say anything and make people laugh maybe three times before they realize you’re not telling jokes.”

- Buddy Hackett



DETAIL

Provide $2 + 2$, not 4.

Don't tell us what the story is about or what the takeaway is; rather, guide us through the story, providing us with the details that we need to come to our own conclusions. Let the story speak for itself.



“The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon.”

- Brandon Sanderson





AUDIENCE

Know who you're talking to and understand what moves them. This will make it easier to craft your story. Tailor your story to fit the needs of your target audience. A story's theme should speak to a specific audience.

**“At its best, storytelling
can directly and tightly
connect the teller and
audience.”**

- National Storytelling Network



BREVITY

Brevity allows the audiences to make inferences, and makes the audience feel respected. Brevity mystifies.



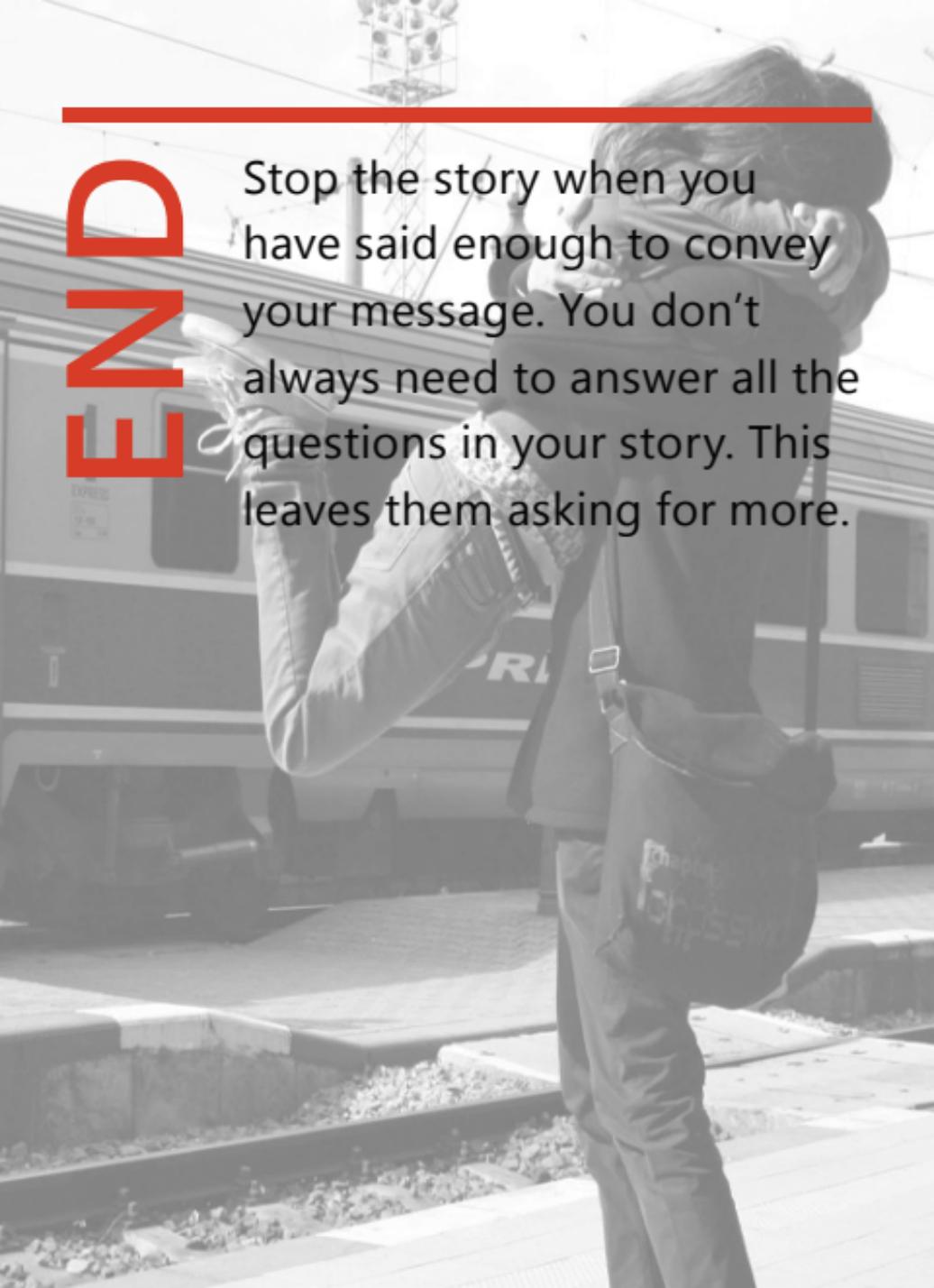
“Brevity is the soul
of wit.”

- William Shakespeare



END

Stop the story when you have said enough to convey your message. You don't always need to answer all the questions in your story. This leaves them asking for more.



“If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story.”

- Orson Welles



CLARITY

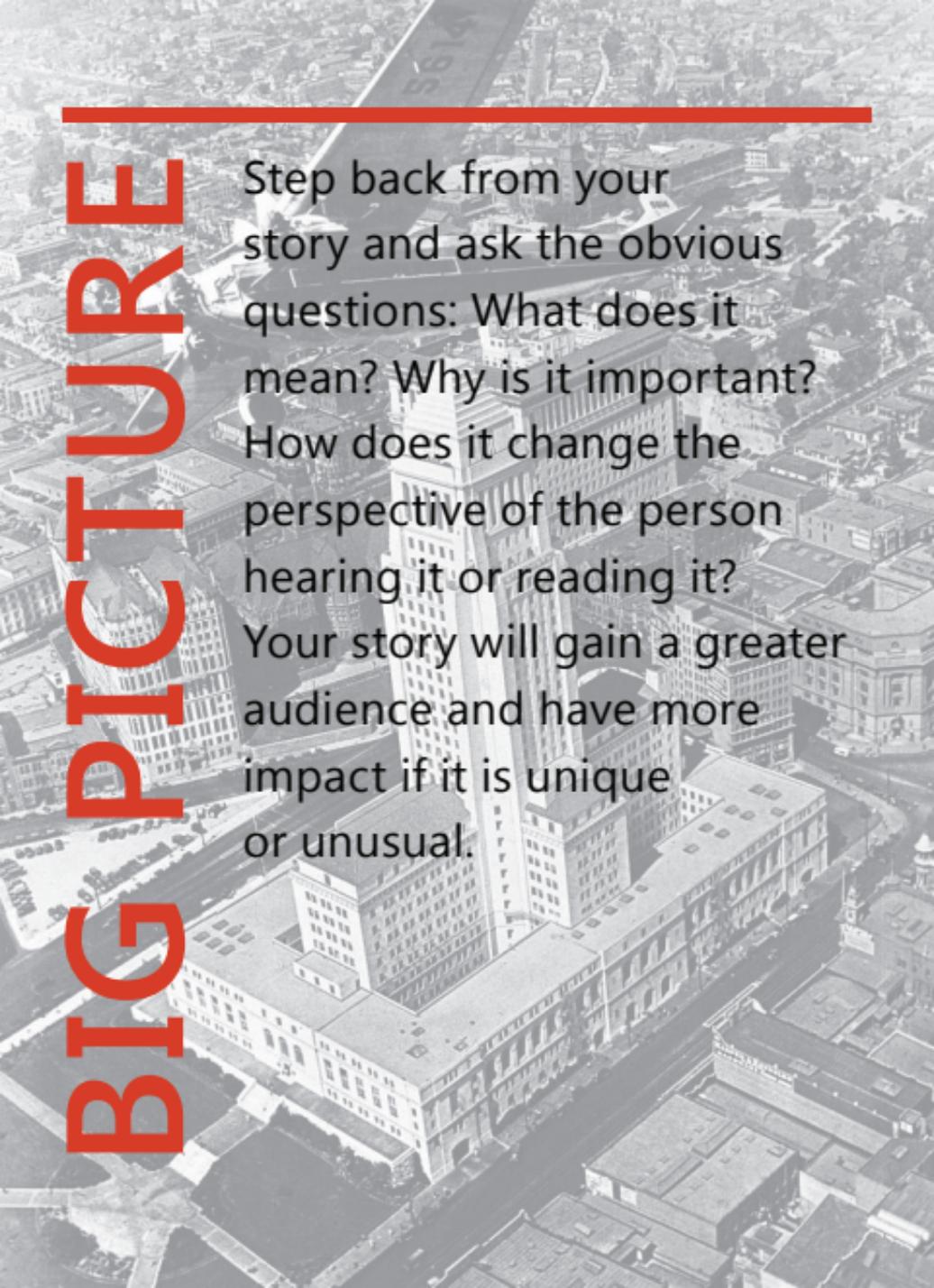
Keeping your goals clear increases your odds of success and momentum. Seek examples of clarity in the wild and learn from the best.



**“The greatest beauty
always lies in the
greatest clarity.”**

- Goothold Lessing



An aerial, grayscale photograph of a city street grid. A prominent, tall skyscraper with a distinctive top section is the central focus. The surrounding buildings are of various heights and styles, creating a dense urban landscape. A red horizontal line is positioned at the top of the page, above the main text.

BIG PICTURE

Step back from your story and ask the obvious questions: What does it mean? Why is it important? How does it change the perspective of the person hearing it or reading it? Your story will gain a greater audience and have more impact if it is unique or unusual.

“We’re all stories,
in the end.”

- Steven Moffat

