

# The SCR Framework

The Situation-Complication-Resolution (SCR) framework is a unique way of telling a story that taps into our natural inclination to make sense of the world through change—going from one state to another.

## Activity outcomes

Understand the SCR framework.

Practice defining a situation, identifying complications, and brainstorming potential resolutions.

Develop a structured presentation outline using the SCR framework.

## Time

1–3 Hours

## Materials needed

Whiteboard or large sheet of paper.

Pen and paper or a digital note-taking tool.

Sticky notes for flexibility.

## Participants

Individual or small group

## SCR Overview

The Situation-Complication-Resolution (SCR) framework is strategy that helps you tell story or explain something by first describing the current situation, then introducing a twist or an obstacle, and closing with how it can be overcome or resolved.

The framework is effective because it creates a natural narrative flow that emotionally resonates with audiences on a fundamental level. Here's how:

**Situation:** In this initial phase, you set the stage by describing the current state of affairs or context. You provide essential background information, data, or trends relevant to clarifying where things are now. This step helps the audience understand the starting point or baseline of the discussion.

**Complication:** After presenting the situation, you introduce obstacles, risks, or issues that make it difficult to move forward. This part of the framework is designed to introduce tension into the story which triggers empathy or suspense in the audience, further investing them in the narrative.

**Resolution:** The final phase involves presenting a solution, recommendation, or plan of action to address the complication. This part of the framework outlines a clear and actionable path forward, demonstrating your expertise and providing a basis for decision-making. It also provides closure and satisfaction for an audience, fulfilling their need for a conclusion.

## 1 Set up your work area and gather content

To start, make sure that your workspace is comfortable and conducive to brainstorming. If working in a group, participants should be able to sit or stand comfortably, and there should be enough space for everyone to see and contribute. Next, gather all the necessary information and data for the presentation or talk. Printouts or physical copies of the presentation research materials are super helpful—you can highlight key points, make notes, and have the information readily available. Here's a sample checklist to help you prepare:

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Case studies                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facts and statistics         | <input type="checkbox"/> Quotes or testimonials        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant articles or reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal anecdotes or stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                        | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                        | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                         |

## 2 Define the situation

The goal of step 2 is to create a concise statement that encapsulates the current situation, opportunity, or problem at hand. Essentially, you provide the audience with the background information they need to understand what's happening right now before you introduce any obstacles or solutions. If the situation is indeed a problem or challenge, it's understandable that you may find it a bit confusing to distinguish it from the complication stage. Let's clarify: **A situation statement** defines the primary issue or challenge that needs attention. It outlines the core problem or opportunity you aim to address. **A complication statement** describes additional factors, issues, or challenges that arise as a result of the primary problem. Complications often make addressing the situation more complex.

Brainstorm key elements or aspects of the situation. Think about the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the situation.

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ What is the primary issue, opportunity or challenge we are trying to address?</li> <li>▲ What data, statistics, or facts can you collect to describe the current situation</li> <li>▲ Who is affected by this issue?</li> <li>▲ How do different stakeholders view the current situation?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ When and where does this issue occur?</li> <li>▲ What are the consequences or impacts of this issue?</li> <li>▲ Why is it important to address this issue now?</li> </ul> |
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**Sample templates for situation statement:**

- ▲ Challenges faced: We've encountered [challenges/changes] in [aspect] over [time period].
- ▲ Performance improvement: There has been a [noticeable improvement] in [performance aspect] over [time period].
- ▲ Impact on operations: [Time period] has seen a significant impact on our [aspect].
- ▲ Achievement recognition: [Our] [accomplishment/efforts] have resulted in [positive outcome] in [area] over [time period].

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Write your final Situation Statement here:**

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### 3 Explore complications

Now that you've defined the situation, it's time to explore potential complications. Complications are additional factors or issues that arise as a result of the primary problem or opportunity. Identifying these complications is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges you'll need to address.

In your individual or group brainstorming sessions, consider what additional issues or complexities might emerge as a result of the situation you've defined. Think about how the primary problem or opportunity may lead to other challenges or issues. These can be interconnected or separate complications. Ask questions like:

- ▲ What other problems could arise from the situation?
- ▲ How might this situation impact different stakeholders?
- ▲ Are there any unintended consequences or side effects to be aware of?
- ▲ What external factors could influence or exacerbate the situation?

#### Example complications:

**Situation 1:** High unemployment rates among recent college graduates.

**Complication 1a:** Increased student loan defaults due to limited job opportunities.

**Complication 1b:** A decline in local businesses as grads leave the region for employment.

**Situation 2:** A growing market for sustainable products in the fashion industry.

**Complication 2a:** Sourcing eco-friendly materials is more expensive, impacting product price.

**Complication 2b:** Increased competition in eco-fashion space makes it harder to stand out.

**Complication 2c:** Challenges in marketing and consumer education about sustainable practices.

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**Write your final Problem Statement here:**

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## 4 Explore potential resolutions

Having defined the situation and identified complications, it's time to brainstorm potential resolutions or solutions. As you brainstorm solutions, it's important to think about their feasibility and potential impact. Consider factors like cost, time, and the resources required to implement each solution. We want to prioritize solutions that are not only effective but also practical and achievable within our constraints.

Start by generating a wide range of ideas—this is the divergent phase. Don't hold back; let your creativity flow. Once we have a list of potential solutions, we'll need to narrow it down—this is the convergent phase. You can use methods like voting or consensus-building to help identify the most promising solutions. This approach ensures we focus on ideas with the greatest potential for success.

Individually or in groups, brainstorm ideas for resolving the primary situation and its complications. Encourage creativity and open-mindedness. There are no bad ideas at this stage. Ask questions like:

- ▲ How can we directly address the core problem or opportunity defined in Step 2?
- ▲ What steps can we take to mitigate or eliminate the complications identified in Step 3?
- ▲ Are there innovative approaches or best practices we can apply?
- ▲ What resources or partnerships might be valuable in implementing these solutions?

### Example resolutions:

**Complication 1:** Sourcing eco-friendly materials becomes more expensive, impacting product affordability.

**Potential resolution 1a:** Investigate local sourcing of sustainable materials. Explore partnerships with local suppliers for sustainable materials to reduce transportation costs and enhance affordability.

**Potential resolution 1b:** Optimize material usage through innovative design. Invest in research and development for innovative designs that maximize the use of sustainable materials, reducing waste and cost.

**Potential resolution 1c:** Establish supplier relationships for bulk discounts. Form long-term partnerships with sustainable material suppliers to negotiate bulk purchase discounts, making eco-friendly materials more affordable.



## 5 Develop a presentation outline

Now it's time to create a structured presentation outline based on the information you've gathered. This outline will be the backbone of the actual presentation or action plan.

### Section 1: Opening

- ▲ Begin with a captivating opening that grabs the audience's attention.
- ▲ Try a relevant story, a surprising statistic, or a thought-provoking question to set the stage.

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### Section 2: Solution

- ▲ Start with the Solution statement. Explain the problem or opportunity the solution addresses.
- ▲ Provide context by sharing relevant market trends, data, or industry insights.
- ▲ Share success stories or case studies if applicable.

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**Section 3:** Complication

- ▲ Transition smoothly into the Complication statement.
- ▲ Highlight the challenges or obstacles that exist.
- ▲ Discuss the implications of not addressing the complication.
- ▲ Use anecdotes or real-world examples to make the complication relatable.

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**Section 4:** Resolution Section

- ▲ Introduce the Resolution statement as the solution to the complication.
- ▲ Explain the framework or strategy you propose to overcome the complication.
- ▲ Break down the resolution into actionable steps or phases.
- ▲ Highlight the benefits and potential outcomes of implementing the resolution.
- ▲ Provide supporting evidence for the solution and resolution. This can include market research, data, testimonials, or expert opinions.
- ▲ Address potential objections or concerns the audience

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**Section 5:** Conclusion and call to action

- ▲ Summarize the key takeaways from each section.
- ▲ Conclude the presentation with a clear and compelling call to action. What do you want the audience to do or think after the presentation?

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