

Can Storytelling Protect the Environment?

Once Upon a Time..



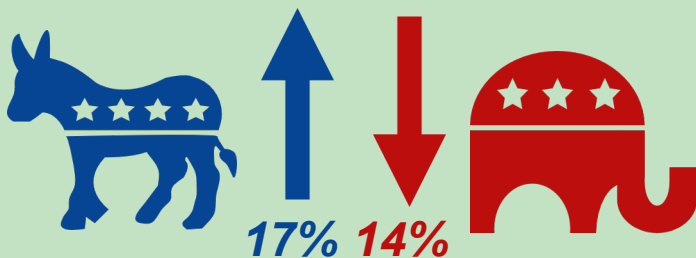
Environmental messages are usually communicated with a heavy dose of science because they are technically complex.



Simple stories are powerful and engaging. Humans have used stories to influence behavior for millennia.

It depends.

In a recent study, people could purchase landscaping products that reduce polluted stormwater runoff. Prior to making their purchase, they read one of two messages about water pollution. One message told a story about a local person who died from a water-borne pathogen. The other message flatly presented scientific information about storm water runoff.



Change in willingness to pay for eco-friendly products after hearing a story

On average, people who heard the story were willing to pay more for the products than people who were exposed to the scientific information. But this effect varied with political affiliation. The story induced a higher willingness to pay among Democrats, while having a negative impact on the willingness to pay of Republicans.



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Want to learn more?

Read the [article](#) in *One Earth* (23 April 2021) or the [pre-print](#)

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Infographic by Kristin Rowles