Fundamentally, every scientific talk is a story. And, like stories, scientific talks have an arc or logical flow: a beginning (the introduction), a middle (the body of the talk) and an end (well, the ending or conclusion). We will be exploring each of these parts further later in the course.

These are the general narrative elements of your research talk:

- **Exposition (Introduction/Background):** This is where you set the stage, introducing your audience to your research topic and question, and give them enough background information so that they can follow the rest of the talk.
- **Inciting Incident (Research Question).** What is the main research question your work seeks to answer? This is the “inciting incident” that “triggers the action” (i.e., the experiments and results) of your story (aka your research talk).
- **Rising action (Experiments and Results).** This is where most of the action of your research happens. A series of experiments and results that eventually (and together) lead you to the answer of your research question(s).
- **Climax (Discovery).** This is the outcome of your research, the highest or most exciting point in your story!
- **Resolution (Conclusion/Ending).** This is where you summarize the results of your work, the conclusions and implications of your discovery.

Thinking about your talk as a story can help you string together its different pieces to present a compelling and cohesive narrative that conveys your passion, the process, and the relevance of your work to your audience. Thinking about the story you want to tell *before* you actually start building your talk and slides will help you select which content to include in the introduction, body and ending of your talk.