

# CREATE-A-THON

## A HOW TO



Through the "Create-A-Thon", ComSciConCAN attendees develop science communication pieces (articles, videos, audio etc.) and workshop them extensively with fellow attendees and science communication experts.

Some of these pieces may even go on to be published in major science communication outlets. You can see examples of pieces written by previous ComSciCon attendees [here](#). ↖

## DURING

This is a valuable opportunity to receive personalized feedback from a science communication expert, so be sure to take complete advantage of it. Here's how:

**1 Explore who your assigned science communication expert is by searching online (website, LinkedIn, social media, etc.).** What has your assigned expert done previously? What training or skills do they have? What have they produced? By exploring what your expert has done you can gain a sense of what expertise they are bringing to the table, and brainstorm some questions you'd like to ask (either specifically about their thoughts on your Create-A-Thon piece, or their career).

**2 When your assigned expert is providing feedback, listen carefully!** Take notes to record the feedback and recommendations that your assigned expert is offering. Feel free to ask questions too, e.g. what did your assigned expert think of that particular paragraph that you were struggling with? Do they have any recommendations on how to make your Create-A-Thon piece stronger? Which outlets or platforms may be the best place for your Create-A-Thon piece?

**3 Listen to the feedback that your assigned expert is providing other members of your group.** Is the expert's feedback similar to what you had recommended to your peer? What's different? By listening to critiques, you can start building your editorial spidey senses and apply them to your own work in the future.

## AFTER

**1 Revise Your Create-A-Thon Piece:**  
Review and incorporate feedback from your assigned science communication expert and peers.  
Revisit the central message of your story. What message are you trying to share? Proofread your Create-A-Thon piece. Consider printing out your piece, or viewing it on a different screen or medium. A different perspective can help you catch potential errors.

If your assigned expert has offered to proofread the final piece, be sure to follow up on this offer! A final set of eyes is always helpful.

**2 Identify a Publisher:**  
Blogs, Campus Newsletters, Campus Journals or Media Outlets  
You can find additional media outlets [here](#), or see where previous ComSciCon attendees have published their pieces [here](#).

**3 Pitching an Article:**  
Review the scope of the publication. Does your Create-A-Thon piece meet the publication's guidelines? Has the outlet recently published a similar piece? What is unique about your pitch, and why does it fit the publication outlet?  
Are you looking for examples of pitches? Head to [The Open Notebook's Pitch Database](#).  
Edit your pitch to be concise and clear. Proofread to catch any typos or mistakes in the text. Be sure to ask for feedback from peers, especially those who are in other fields or are unfamiliar with the topic.  
Send the pitch! You may hear back immediately, or not. Consider following up at the one or two week mark to gently ask if the editor is interested at all. But keep in mind that not all editors are able to respond as they are busy meeting deadlines and receive many pitches.

In your pitch, include:  
Background information (1 - 2 sentences)  
Why it's important and how it fits this publisher  
What is your expertise and perspective?

**A story**

One brief framework for storytelling is the "And, But, Therefore" framework, also known as the ABT. In this framework, you provide some background information (\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_), a problem that is being solved or a question that is being asked (but, \_\_\_\_), and a solution to this problem or potential answers to this question (therefore \_\_\_\_).

Optional: If you already have an article, you can send it along

It may take a few tries to get your Create-A-Thon published! This is perfectly normal, and the same is true for science writing and/or journalism. Once you do publish your Create-A-Thon piece, please do share your piece with us via email or tag us in on social media (@ComSciConCan, @ComSciConCanW, @ComSciConCanGTA, @ComSciConCanATL, @ComSciConQC) so that we can help amplify!