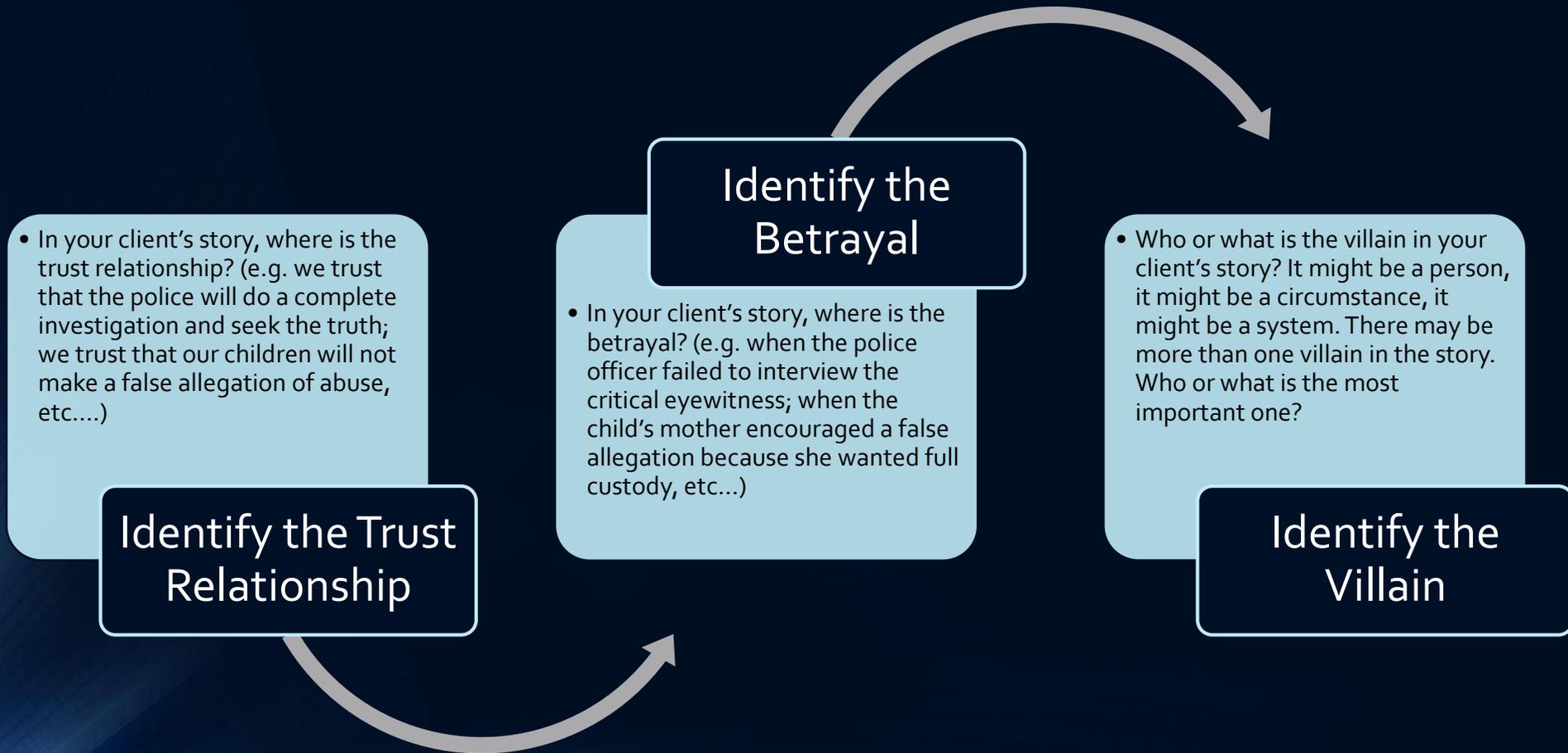


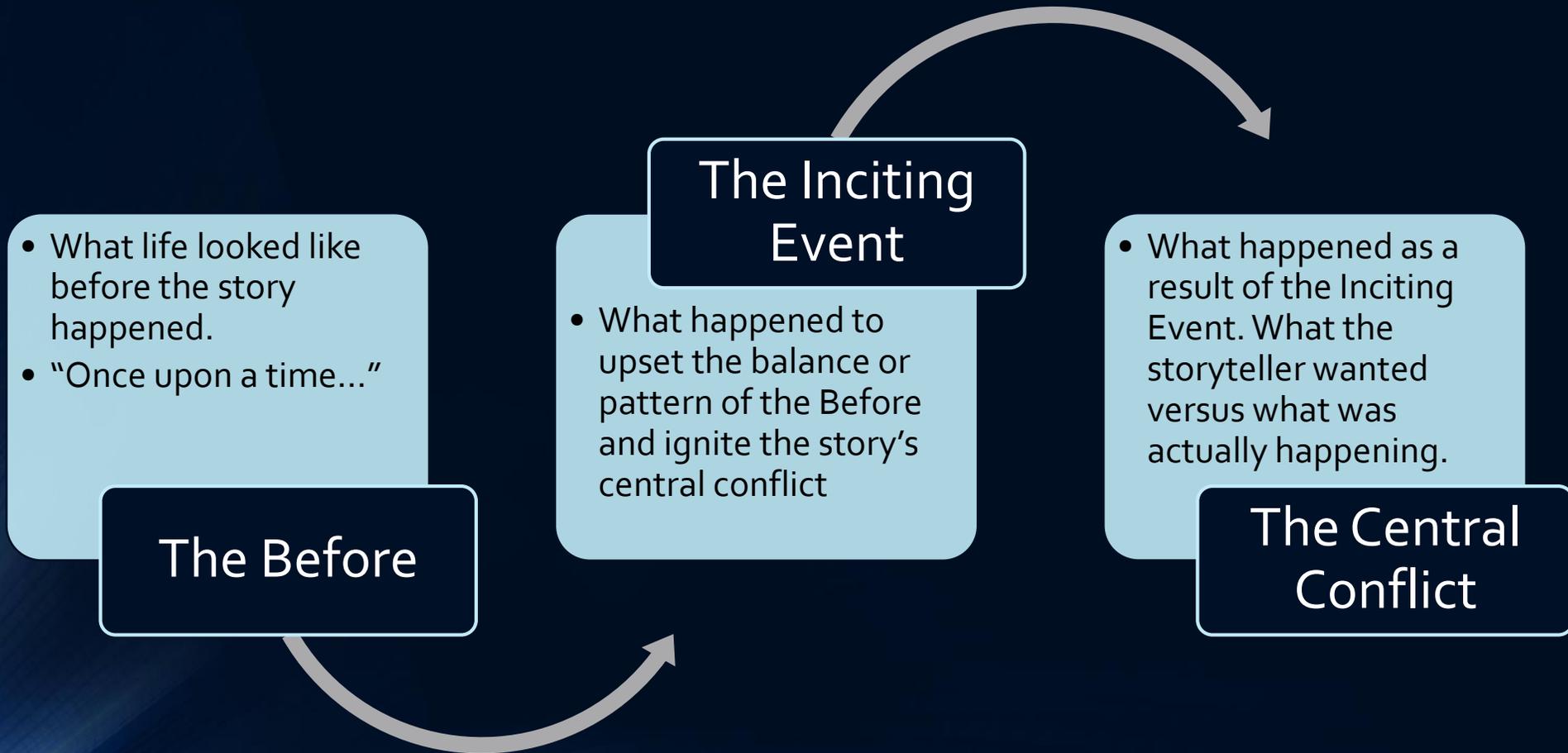
Opening Statements

TRIAL SKILLS SIMULATION PROGRAM

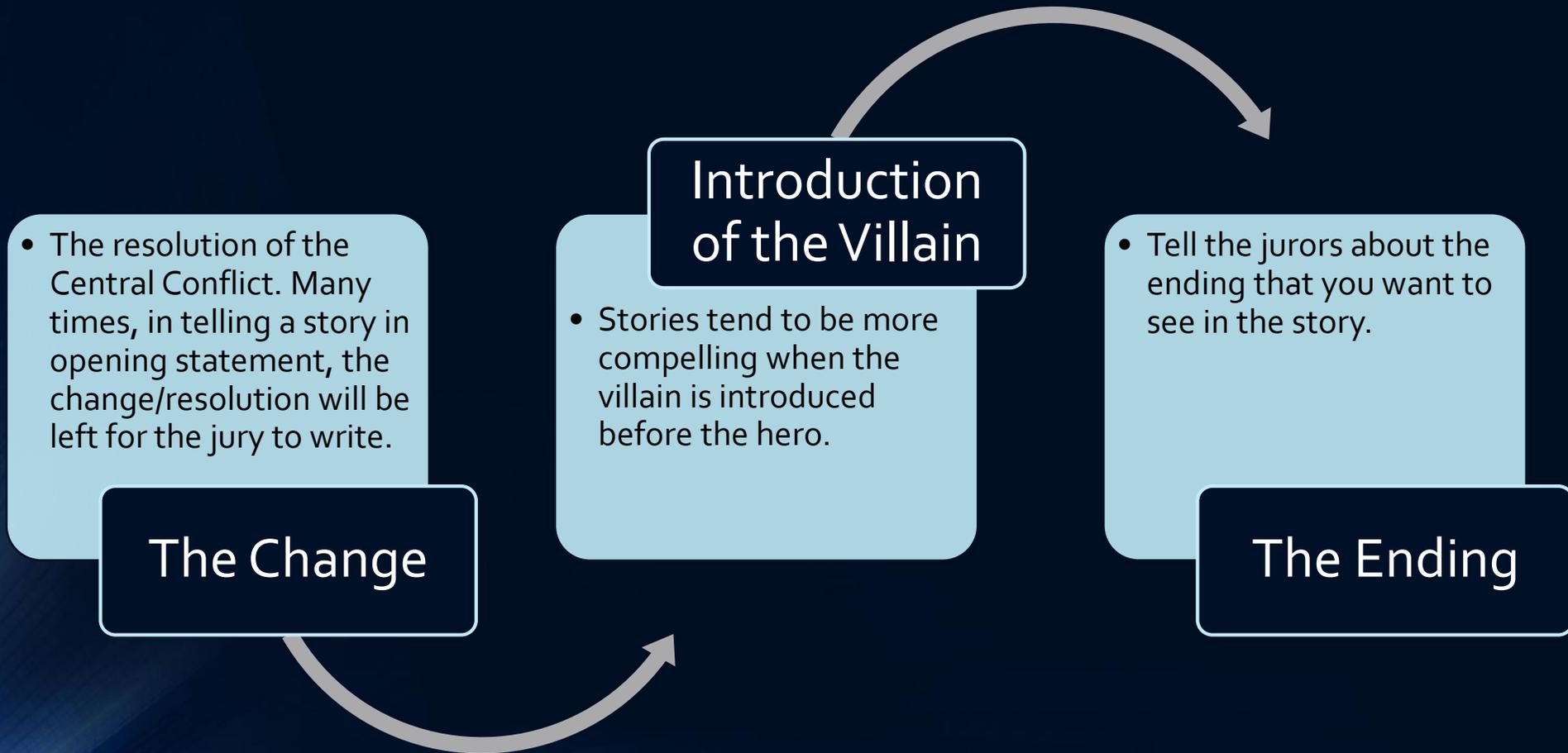
Steps of Opening Statement



Steps of Opening Statement: Structuring your Story



Steps of Opening Statement: Structuring your Story



Opening Statement Story Structure

SCENE

- A scene gives a moment-by-moment account of what happened on one particular day, at one particular time. A well-crafted scene will show us what the protagonist did, saw, and heard, as well as what they were thinking and feeling.

SUMMARY

- A summary gives a broader view of the protagonist and/or things they did or experienced, as well as the things that they thought or felt. It could be envisioned or expressed as a statement (“I was a perfectionist”), supported by some explanation or examples (“My parents had high standards, I feared making mistakes,” etc...).

Opening Statement Story Structure

- In order to hold the jurors' attention, you should balance scenes and summaries.
- If the story has too few scenes, it will be less compelling. Moment-by-moment scenes help us to feel the action of the story by showing us what the protagonist went through, both externally and internally. Scenes help the listener experience the events the same way the protagonist did, as if they were watching a movie.
- If the story has too many scenes, it becomes difficult for the listener to focus their attention. Because scenes take the listener, moment-by-moment, through the action, they are most effectively used at the story's most pivotal points. A scene signals for the listener that there is an important or significant moment happening in the story.

Opening Statement

Story Structure: The Change Statement

- The heart of the story is the change. Creating a “change statement” may help you find the heart of your story.
- Because of these events, I went from _____ to _____.
- Because of these events, my relationship with/to _____ went from _____ to _____.
- The change might be from within the protagonist, or be a change in relationship between the protagonist and another person or a system.

Opening Statement Elements of Story Structure

THE BEFORE

- What life looked like before the story.
- The “Before” is a great place to make use of a summary.
- The “Before” might simply be the first part of your change statement.

THE INCITING EVENT

- What happened to upset the pattern of the Before.
- Usually expressed in a scene.
- Moment-by-moment details

Opening Statement Elements of Story Structure

THE CENTRAL CONFLICT

- The rising action.
- The struggle between what the protagonist wanted and what or who was working against the protagonist.
- Expressed through a combination of scenes and summaries.

THE CHANGE

- What happened to upset the pattern of the Before.
- Usually expressed in a scene.
- Moment-by-moment details

Opening Statement

Refining the Story

- Find the Theme: A theme is a more “universal” description of the story, and can be expressed in a word or short phrase. For example, you may be telling a story of courage or forgiveness. Defining a theme will help you select details that will most effectively deliver the story’s impact, and edit out the details that do not further the theme.
- Raise the Stakes: Why does it matter so much to the protagonist? What does your protagonist (client) stand to lose or gain by the outcome of these events? The more clearly the jurors understand your client’s personal stakes, the more easily they can get on-board with your client and feel the urgency of the story’s action (and of a not guilty verdict).
- Time: Length of the story can have a real impact on the jurors’ ability to focus and pay attention. Edit your story to ensure that you can hold jurors’ attention.

Opening Statement Improving the Storytelling

- Voice
- Present tense
- Movement
- Connection with the audience (jury)