# Nine Dates with Content and Coffee

## Date 3: Content as Story

香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

# Content: how to tell a story

## Theme and Structure

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# Theme

What is a theme?

- The First World War

- The First World War lasted from 1914 to 1918.

- The First World War is a watershed in the history of wars.

What is a theme?

- Diana Li Scholarship

- The Diana Li Scholarship is worth four years' tuition fees.

- The Diana Li Scholarship has helped many students from poor families to finish their university education.

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# Structure

- Theme
- Sub-themes
- Sub-sub-themes
- Introduction-Body-Summary

# Structure

- **Introduction – introduce theme and sub-themes**

- **Body – each theme in one paragraph, supported by sub-themes**

- **Summary – repeat / refine theme; do not start something new / err on the light side**

# 'What I have Lived for'

Theme: My life is governed by three passions

- Sub-theme 1: (1st passion) longing for love

- Sub-theme 2: (2nd passion) search for knowledge

- Sub-theme 3: (3rd passion) pity for mankind

# Body: sub-theme 1

Why seek love?

- s-s-t 1: brings ecstasy
- s-s-t 2: relieves loneliness
- s-s-t 3: love = heaven
- Result?

# Body: sub-theme 2

What knowledge to pursue?

- s-s-t 1: hearts of men
- s-s-t 2: why the stars shine
- s-s-t 3: mathematics
- Result?

# Body: sub-theme 3

Pity for whom?

- s-s-t 1: children in famine (economical; *poverty*)

- s-s-t 2: tortured victims (political; *pain*)

- s-s-t 3: helpless old people (human; *loneliness*)

- Result?

# 'The Laws of Sociodynamics'

Theme: society is governed by three laws

- Sub-theme 1: (1st law) someone has to pay up

- Sub-theme 2: (2nd law) humans are motivated by own interests

- Sub-theme 3: (3rd law) positive reinforcement causes disaster

# Body: sub-theme 1

- s-s-t 1: Eastern Europe not isolated
- s-s-t 2: forms of free lunches
- s-s-t 3: what environmental regulation should do

# Body: sub-theme 2

- s-s-t 1: incentives subtle and difficult
- s-s-t 2: pluralism of incentives
- s-s-t 3: problems when incentives are mismatched

# Body: sub-theme 3

- s-s-t 1: why consequences are on such a large scale

- s-s-t 2: the hubris of bureaucracy

- s-s-t 3: the press (checks and balance) can help

# The Laws of Sociodynamics

Thesis/themes re-stated in summary:

Good societies follow these laws:

- 1$^{st}$: facing true costs
- 2$^{nd}$: providing proper incentives
- 3$^{rd}$: being willing to expose errors and inefficiency

# Write Your Own Story

Theme: what you want to say

Develop sub-themes

Develop sub-sub-themes

Write attractive introduction

Write clear paragraphs in body

Write light summary

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Theme: The Diana Li Scholarship has helped many students from poor families to finish their university education.

Sub-theme 1:

- sub-sub-theme 1
- sub-sub-theme 2
- sub-sub-theme 3

Sub-theme 2:

- sub-sub-theme 1
- sub-sub-theme 2
- sub-sub-theme 3

Sub-theme 3:

- sub-sub-theme 1
- sub-sub-theme 2
- sub-sub-theme 3

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