



Creative Writing – what you need to write a story

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When you write a story it needs a beginning, middle, and end. That seems like a simple thing to say, but it's not always an easy task to do! You need to write something exciting people will want to read, and this means setting the scene with description, having funny or scary characters, a plot, and some snappy dialogue (when two people speak) in your story. You also need a main character (your hero), and a baddie (your villain).

- ***Create a Main Character*** – think about why you like your best friend. Are they funny, silly, naughty, weird, quiet, talkative, adventurous? And what do they love to do – skateboarding? Playing games? Running? Football? Now see if you can put some, or all, of these personality bits into a character in a story. And when you do, think about how your characters hobbies, skills and feelings help make the story work...and what are they good or bad at?
- ***Set the Scene*** – where do you want your story to take place? You could make it all happen in your front room, but this might be a bit boring. How about...under your floorboards? Up a mountain? In space? In a forest? At school? In your garden shed? On the moon? In a bowl of cereal? Wherever it happens, use lots of description to show the reader where they are, e.g. if it's in space, describe being weightless or describe how the stars look.
- ***Make a Plot*** – your story has to have a reason to happen. This is the plot. Normally, it is something that happens in the life of the main character, i.e. they might get trapped in a cave and need to get out, so the story is how they escape. What do you want to happen in your story? And how will your main character get through it? If you make your character scared of small spaces, it makes the story of being trapped in a cave much more frightening for them and exciting to read.

- **Writing Dialogue** – use speech marks and write on separate lines to show two or three people talking. Make sure each character says something important to the story, don't just make them list things or say obvious stuff. Get them to talk about their feelings, i.e. if they are trapped in the cave, how scared are they and how will they get out? Keep your dialogue short, and make your characters argue about different points of view as this is more exciting to read!
- **Heroes and Villains** – we know that our main character is the hero. This is the person we see the story through, and they are usually a good person (but not always!). The villain, or baddie, or antagonist, is someone (or something) that disrupts the life of the hero. They might hate the hero for some reason, or want to take something the hero has from them, or they might be a school bully looking to scare people. Villains can also be things like bad weather, sharks hunting people to eat them, ghosts, evil warriors, enemy soldiers, and even your nasty big sister/brother! Whoever they are, make them horrible so we don't like them and so the reader is a little afraid of them.



Writing Challenge: Three friends are on a school caving trip, but when part of the cave collapses, they are trapped and split from the main group. The friends head deeper into the cave, but it starts to flood with water. Between them, they only have one rope, one bottle of water, one chocolate bar and no mobile phones. They have to get out before they're left there forever. Your story is about how they escape, what nasty things happen to them, how they fight with one another, how they use the rope and their supplies, and what happens at the end.

To make it more interesting, make each friend different. How do they cope with being trapped? Does one panic, but another make jokes? And, also, let's make one friend the school bully who no one likes (the villain). What does the bully do to the other two to make their escape harder?

And, before you start writing, ask yourself these questions – do they all survive? Does one get hurt and the others have to carry them out? Where is the cave? What's it called? And how worried will their parents be knowing they are trapped?

Have fun writing an exciting story!

Technique Tips

When you write your story, here are some clever tricks you might want to try to make it flow better:

- Start with the end – why not write your last scene first but don't reveal everything that will happen! Then work your way back from the end...if that makes sense!
- Use what's called a "flashback" to give your reader some background information about your characters. Flashbacks are like memories; you see them used on TV or in films a lot. For instance, your trapped cave boy or girl might have a memory of being stuck in the garden shed all day, which is why they hate small places. You could write this scary memory into your story to make your character feel more alive and real.
- Think about how you feel when you have certain thoughts. So, when you're happy you might feel like you want to jump around. When you're sad, you just want to lower your head and sit down quietly. Describing these things in your story will make your reader feel like they're really watching and feeling the action.
- Remember the world is made up of smells, sights, sounds, colours, and textures. Use your senses to write your story!