

Before you write a narrative, remember to think carefully about the plot structure, so that you know how the story will end.

### Structure

Here is a typical six-step story structure:

1. **Exposition:** Introduction to characters, background and essential information about the story.
2. **Conflict:** The problem the characters face or what they need to achieve.
3. **Rising action:** Events that will lead up to the climax. You can use this to create suspense.
4. **Climax:** The most exciting point of the story, this will decide the outcome for the characters.
5. **Falling action:** Everything that happens as a result of the high point noted above.
6. **Resolution:** This should complete the story. It can be unexpected, leave the reader with questions, or it can tie up everything nicely.

You could add a plot twist to the climax or the resolution: this is an unexpected event that you might have hinted at, but that the reader would question because it was not obvious.

### Story starters

Now choose one of the story starters below and plan your own story. Use the six steps above to help you plan what will happen in each part of the story. Just write in note form at this stage.

He could see the car in his rear view mirror as he pulled out of the drive. It was a silver Ford Focus, nothing unusual about that. But this same car had followed him to work every morning for the past two weeks.

Angela felt around in the space underneath the drawer. Her fingers closed around the journal. This was what she had been searching for.

The strange noises continued. They huddled closer together in the darkness, having no idea what would happen next.

Gerry sat at the table sipping his beer, drumming his fingers absent-mindedly. This was the first time he had met her in person, and nervous wasn't the word.

The beautiful blue stretched out before them. Little fluffy white clouds hovered, creating the perfect picture of an ideal sky. Charlie knew that this was going to be the best holiday they had ever had.

Kat was the next on stage and she felt sick. Her hands were clammy and heat prickled the back of her neck. In the distance she heard her name being announced. This was it, she was up.

As he stood before them, they all agreed: no one had ever seen anything quite like this before.

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....
- 4. ....
- 5. ....
- 6. ....

‘Showing’ not ‘telling’

One writing technique that is especially effective in making your writing come alive, is to ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’ your reader what is happening. Here’s an example:

She slapped him.	<i>becomes</i>	The sting whipped across his face like a thousand angry bees. She stood, with her hand still raised, ready to strike again.
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Practise with the sentences below.

- 1. The woman was nervous.  
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- 2. The dog was vicious.  
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- 3. The car caught alight.  
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Writing stories

Now have a go at writing your chosen story. Use your plan, and include some sentences which ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’ the reader what is happening.