

Top tips for short story writing

Writing a short story can be both creative and fun, but also challenging. One way to overcome this challenge is to plan the story before you start. You can structure the story from beginning to end so making the writing process easier. Here's how to do this:

Think of one or more ideas

Re-read your favourite book. What do you like and enjoy about it? This could provide ideas for what you might like to include in your story. Can you think of an alternative ending for your favourite book? This could also be the basis for your story. Alternatively, you can write a story based on a real-life experience such as a past adventure or outing with a friend.

Create a main character and a setting

Think about the people (known as 'characters') who will appear in your story. There is often a main character around which the story revolves. Is your main character a child, an adult or an animal? Will your story be set locally, in outer space, in the past or the future?

The opening scene

All stories have a beginning, middle and end. Use the ideas you thought of and expand them to create an opening scene (beginning). You might like to include what's interesting about your main character. For instance, s/he is a magical being with wild hair who is lost, but can create portals to travel from one place to another.

The conflict

A story needs conflict to make it interesting. Think about one or two of your favourite books and identify the conflict within them. Here are some examples of conflict: the introduction of a new character who disagrees with the main character; the main character enters a forest and is attacked by wild plants; the main character questions whether they are making the correct decision or taking the correct course of action; the main character needs to find a way to prove their worth or influence a group of people.

The turning point

The turning point is usually around the middle of the story and makes the story even more interesting to the reader. It needs to be something the reader would least expect. For example, your main character suddenly discovers that they are actually from another planet or have a magical power.

The resolution

You now need a resolution to your story – this tells us how the conflict is resolved or dealt with. You might also like to link your conflict with your turning point for added interest. If so, you will need to tie-up any and all loose ends in both respects to create a good resolution.

The end

A good ending is also essential. You might like to say what happened to your main character after the conflict is resolved or dealt with. Did they achieve something, or did they learn an important lesson as a result?