

What's Your Story?

Share your stories with the world.

Genre: Communication, Entertainment, Information, Knowledge

Writing stories and sharing them is one of the most powerful ways to grow your imagination.

What makes a great story? Is it beautiful writing? Poetic prose with affluent alliteration or robust and raucous rhyme schemes alongside a carefully crafted symphony of sentences. Eh, probably not. Words are just sounds. Without meaning behind them, sounding good isn't going to make our readers or listeners smile or cry.



A great story makes readers feel a variety of emotions, from happiness, and excitement to sadness and tension.



What about a cool idea? Or an exciting setting?

"Picture this, a super-mech robot tries to destroy this gritty post-apocalyptic world."

"Okay, how do we stop it?"

"We don't, that's the twist!"

It's a cool idea and a fun setting, but a bad story. Why? Well, it's over in fourteen seconds and nobody has a chance to save the world from this super-mech. Stories are about change and growth. They're about characters we connect with going on a journey where we root for their success and fear for their failure.

So then, what about the plot? A boy goes to school where a bad guy with a weird name tries to upend his education. If that were all the Harry Potter series had going for it, people likely wouldn't be proudly proclaiming their Hogwarts House on the internet.

PLOT DIAGRAM



A good story follows the narrative arch above, creating a meaningful story that keeps the reader reading from beginning to end.

Well, what about conflict? A girl with a bow and arrow gets mad at the President for hoarding bread and fights him. That can't be all the Hunger Games is about. And it's not, just like there's more to Harry Potter and likely would be more to Post-Apocalyptic World-Destroying Mech-Robot: Revenge of the Cliché, if given the chance.

Everything we mentioned above are important parts of a story – but these parts need to be combined in a stunning and sometimes messy mixture. That said, there is a method to the madness of storytelling, and if you want to tell your own story, then it's important to understand...

The Elements of Story

To a lot of writing seminars and books on writing, there are: 5 Elements of a Story: characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution. This means that no matter what story you're writing, these five things need to be taken into consideration.

You should know the:

Characters – Who is your story about? Who is your protagonist or the hero of your story? Who are their friends or enemies? What are their faults or talents? What do they need or want?

Setting – Where does your story take place? Is it the real world? Is it a wizarding school with the weirdest name ever? Is it outer space or in the distant past? Build your world how you want it.

Plot – What is driving your story forward? What is keeping your protagonist from sitting at home on their butt? What brought them into the story and keeps them going? Are they trying to protect someone, to stop something or someone, to get somewhere?

Conflict – Every good story needs a tonne of conflict. It needs obstacles in your hero's way. Without Voldemort, Harry Potter would just be going to wizard school. That's interesting, but not a story. Without President Snow, Katniss might not have even been brought to fight in the Hunger Games at all. What causes disagreement with your characters? What do they love or fight against? What's standing in their way?

Resolution – Not every story needs a happy ending, but every story needs an ending. Does your hero win? If they win, what do they lose? If they lose, how have they changed? Have they grown from the events of this story? Have they learned or stayed the same?

Every story needs these five things. However, these five things are a framework – they're a skeleton. Skeletons keep our bodies in place, but there's a lot more to us. Your own style, experience, perspective, energy, and passion – that's what makes your story unique.



**Your story will be as
unique as you are.**

So, with that, we'll tell you five more things to remember when telling your very own story.
First up:

1. You're Not Alone

When telling a story, sometimes we feel like our life isn't interesting enough or our problems aren't worth expressing. What you'll find when writing and sharing your stories is that you're not alone. Your trials, hardships, and successes – there are people who have shared them and people who are going through them. Because of that, whatever story you have to tell is worth telling. Never doubt that.



Your story will be shaped by your experiences and as you grow older, your stories will grow in complexity.

2. Fold Your Laundry

Writing a story is like cleaning out your mind. You have these thoughts laid out on a bed like laundry. They're messy and wrinkled and a big jumbled. Your job, when telling a story, is to take those thoughts one by one and fold them. Organize them. Put the shirts together, the pants, the underwear, and the socks. Make nice stacks and piles and put them in your closet (i.e. Write them down in a logical sequence.)

3. Understand Your Protagonist

Your protagonist is everyone else's conduit to your story. They're who will help the reader understand what's happening. Harry Potter is a hero of the wizarding world and he's never been to it. He's never even heard of wizards. When he experiences the magic for the first time, so do we, as the audience.

4. Eating the World's Biggest Pizza

Writing a story, any story, is tough to do. If you've read a 400-page novel and it took hours, even days – imagine how long it took to write it. Writing a story is like eating the world's biggest pizza. If someone told you to do that, would you try to shove the entire piece in your mouth? No way! You'd take it how you take writing a story – piece by piece, bite by bite, and word by word.

5. You're Never Too Young

And finally, you're never too young to start sharing your stories. Your experience is unique and worth sharing. You may not have all the tools yet to share it how you want to, but you will. Every time you write, you'll get better at it. It's all about practice and persistence. If you start writing today, in a few years, you'll see how far you've come – how much you've grown as a person and as a storyteller.

So, what's your story?

 **Good to Think About**



1..What things should you include when writing a story that will appeal to your peers?

2. Why are young adults interested in novels like Harry Potter, Divergent, or The Hunger Games?

3. What is so appealing about them?

4. What factors are most important to include when writing a story that young people want to read?


5. If you were to write a story, what would you write about?

4. What factors are most important to include when writing a story that young people want to read?



Key Vocabulary

- alliteration
- symphony
- storytelling
- resolution
- protagonist
- conflict
- perspective
- audience
- experience
- storyteller



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