

Write On! Once Upon a Time

Writing a Short Story

Everybody loves a good story. Have you ever heard a story that made you think about a different place? A different time? Different people? A good story can bring different worlds alive. Many cultures have people who pass along stories from generation to generation. They tell stories of kings and queens, discoveries, and wars. Some of the stories are accounts of actual events (**non-fiction**), and some stories are made-up (**fiction**). It can be as much fun writing these stories as reading them—or listening to them. In this lesson, you will get the chance to write your own fictional story. You will write about people and places that you have created.

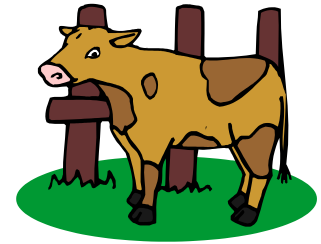
Does this sound hard? It doesn't have to be. You tell stories all the time. Have you ever come home from work or a party and told someone all about it? Did you ever see something funny and tell a friend? You are telling stories. In this lesson, we will change the names and some of the details. You will write one of them down. It doesn't have to be long. The following example only has three paragraphs.



The Biting Fence

My older sister had a boyfriend. His name was Armando. He lived in the city and worked in a restaurant. He came out to the country one summer to visit my sister. As a chef, he was used to wearing white pants and shirts. He was used to cooking livestock, not caring for it. He knew nothing about the animals on the farm. One day my sister was going to be busy all day. She asked me to take Armando with me to the farm. That was a mistake.

Early that morning Armando came to the breakfast table. He was dressed in white pants. I told him he would get those dirty. I told him to change, but he said he would be okay. We walked down to the farm. I milked the cows. Armando stood outside the barn. When I was done milking, the farmer asked me to herd the cows to the back pasture. I told Armando to come with me. We walked the cows through the field. One strayed away. I told Armando to go open the wire gate and the cows would go in. I went to get the one that strayed.



All of a sudden, I heard a shout. I turned and saw Armando. He jumped back from the fence and slipped in the mud. He fell. I started to laugh. He got mad at me. I came running over and let the cows into the pasture. Once they were safe, I helped Armando up. His white pants were covered in mud. I asked him what happened. He told me that when he touched the fence it bit him. I laughed harder. I told him that the fence had electricity running through it. He was shaken up and he was dirty. That night, Armando told my sister that he was going back to the city. He didn't want to stay where the fences could bite.

Did you think that was a funny story? Does it sound like something that could happen to you? This story is not true; it is fiction. This is a story that could happen to anyone. You can write a story like this that has humor, or any other type of story. What is your favorite kind of story?

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Brainstorming: Coming Up with Ideas

Do you already have an idea for a short story? There are many things to think about when you write a story. Where will it take place? Who are your characters? When did it happen? How long will it be? Why are you telling this story? Fill in the chart below. It is a **graphic organizer**. It will help you answer some of these questions. We are going to write a three-paragraph story. You will want to keep it simple.



Check it Out!

What's the Story in the Reading on the Move lesson series can also help you with writing your story.

Find it on the Internet at

www.migrant.net/migrant/publications/index.htm

<p>Why are you telling this story?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want to make readers laugh. • I want to scare the reader. • I want the reader to fall in love. 	
<p>Where will the story take place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a farm in New York State • In a factory in Texas • In a small town in Mexico 	
<p>Who are your characters? (no more than 2 or 3 for this story)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are their names? • How old are they? • What else can you tell me about them? 	
<p>When does this take place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a day, a month, a year? • In only a few minutes? • At night? • In the future? • 1900? 	
<p>What is going to happen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a bulleted list of action. 	
<p>How is your story going to end?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they going to live happily ever after? • Will someone be dead? Born? • Will someone learn a lesson? 	

Short Story Checklist

- I have an opening that introduces my characters.
- I have a middle where the action begins.
- I have an ending with a climax.

Writing Traits Scored in this Lesson

	Great Job 5 points	Almost There 3 points	Keep Working 1 point
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a consistent tone. • The audience wants to read more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tone is fairly consistent. • It could be made more interesting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tone is unclear and inconsistent. • The piece is not interesting to read.
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a variety of colorful and descriptive words. • Words are not repeated too often. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some colorful and descriptive words are used. • Some words are repeated too often. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorful and descriptive words are lacking. • Sometimes wrong words are used. • Several words are repeated too often.

Words to know

non-fiction: stories written about actual events

fiction: stories that are made-up; not real

graphic organizer: a visual aid that helps you organize your thoughts

climax: the point of biggest impact; a turning point

