



Structure a story



Holly King-Mand

Holly King-Mand is the nation's favourite English teacher, having had thousands join her online lessons throughout lockdown. She loves Shakespeare and sharing her love of learning. Here she shares how to structure a story.

TOP TIP

Villains are more interesting to read about if they have endearing qualities.

1 Decide on a genre

A genre is a theme or type of story, for example adventure, fantasy, romance, detective or myth (to name but a few). Decide which genre you'd like your story to fit into so you can be sure to use all the common features your reader will be expecting.



2 Characters

The protagonist is the main character, so you'll need at least one of those and some sidekicks or other key characters around them.

Antagonists (or villains) are a great way to drive your story forward and can contrast with your protagonist.

3 Setting

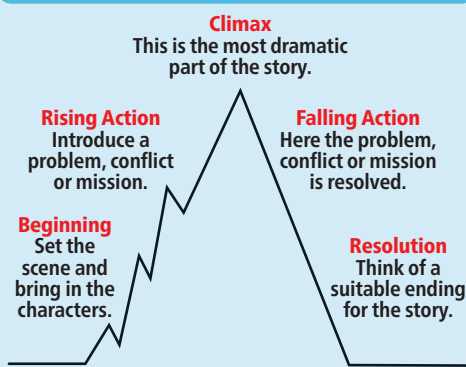
Deciding on the setting of your story might tie in with the genre. Think carefully about how you will describe the setting at the start of your story to help the reader visualise where the action is happening.



4 Story Mountain planning

Typical story structure varies from genre to genre, but almost all will follow this simple shape. We often call this "The Story Mountain".

STORY MOUNTAIN



5 Beginning or exposition

The beginning (or exposition) of a story is where you introduce your characters and set the scene. It's the perfect time to introduce a backstory or any other information your reader might need to enjoy the story ahead.



move your characters to new locations or introduce other characters, and tension should begin to build.

6 Rising action

Introducing some sort of problem, mystery, conflict or mission is a great way of propelling your characters forward into your story. You can



7 Climax

The climax is always the most exciting and dramatic moment of your story. It may include tension or suspense before a big reveal or a character's achievement.

8 Falling action and resolution

This part of a story is where the characters resolve the conflict, mystery, problem or mission. The resolution might have a happy ending or a cliffhanger (leaving the reader wondering what happens next).



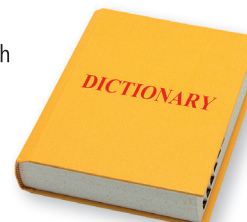
include too many or you might confuse your readers.

9 Twists and turns

Twists and turns are a great way of creating an interesting story and keeping readers on their toes. Be careful not to

10 Writing tips

Check your spelling with a dictionary, your punctuation and grammar. Look at your vocabulary and see if, using a thesaurus, you can create something more engaging. Don't be afraid to cut bits and rewrite sections: redrafting is the key to a successful story.



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