

How to write an awesome ending



Holly King-Mand

Holly King-Mand is a writer and presenter who champions literacy (the ability to read and write). She was nicknamed "The Nation's Favourite English Teacher", after giving thousands of pupils online lessons during the Covid-19 pandemic, and she loves to help children create magical fiction. Parents and guardians can find out more about Holly's live and interactive online classes at hollysclassroom.com

This week we look at how to end a story, which can be a lot harder than starting one. Great writing isn't just about well-written sentences, it is also how a story is put together – what's known as structure. Here are Holly's ideas for how to use your structure to make sure your stories finish with a bang.

1 Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a way of preparing your reader for a great ending. It means giving them clues throughout the story to keep them interested in what will happen later. For example, stormy weather could be a sign that something bad or dramatic is going to happen. You can draw attention to an object or something about your character in order to leave a hint. For example, if they dream about finding a gold coin, it could be a sign that they will become rich.



2 Happily ever after

This is most people's favourite way to end a story. With a happy ending, all the loose ends are resolved, questions are answered and characters get all the good things they deserve. They might make up with their friends, find the missing treasure or overcome a bully or difficult time. Readers are left feeling satisfied when they finish a book with this kind of ending.



3 The cliffhanger

A cliffhanger ending is very popular when you can't think of how to finish your story. It often involves the storyline ending abruptly and the reader is left thinking, "Goodness me, what will happen next?" It is important to remember this type of ending can also leave your reader feeling frustrated that so much was left unexplained. However, it's a good way to set up a sequel (follow-on story).



Prepare a fantastic ending.



4 Start at the end

One interesting way to begin your story is to start it with the ending. To make this work well, you need to carefully plan out your entire plot before you start writing the story. You'll need to make your ending-at-the-start really intriguing, or blow your readers away with a dramatic event. The idea is that they will be motivated to keep reading the story to find out how the characters got to that point. This is tricky to master but practice makes perfect.



5 Surprise!

Sometimes a big twist in the story, particularly at the end, can make your writing shine. An unexpected surprise can give the reader a big "wow!" moment. Maybe a secret is uncovered, a character is revealed as an entirely different person or the story goes in a different direction – it could suddenly become a ghost story. However you do it, the aim is to thrill your reader and make them say, "I was not expecting that ending!"



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