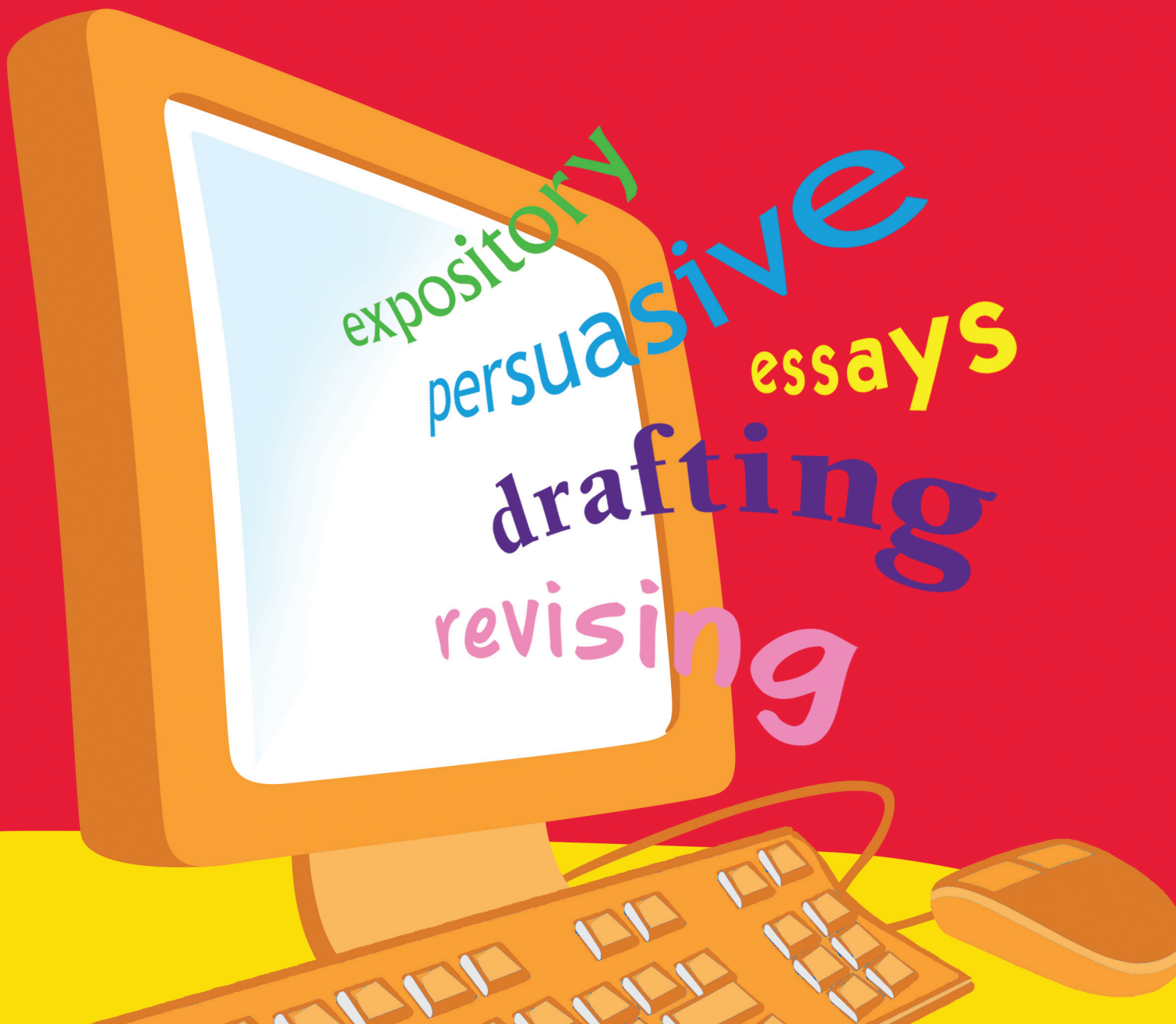


Level D

SADLIER

# Writing Workshop



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# THE WRITING PROCESS

## PREWRITING

### Finding an Idea

- Freewrite or brainstorm ideas for a topic.
- Choose and narrow a topic.
- Gather details.

### Making a Plan

- Identify your purpose (to explain, persuade, entertain, describe, or convey an experience).
- Identify what your audience does and does not know.
- Organize your details in an outline.

## DRAFTING

- Concentrate on getting your ideas down—not on fixing errors!
- Keep your audience in mind as you write.
- Write a complete introduction, body, and conclusion.

## REVISING

- Evaluate your draft, identifying ways to improve it.
- As you review your draft, focus on five of the six traits of good writing (ideas and content, organization, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).
- Ask a peer reviewer to give feedback on your draft.

## EDITING AND PROOFREADING

- Look for mistakes in the sixth trait of good writing, conventions (grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling).
- Proofread your draft.

## PUBLISHING AND PRESENTING

- Write a final version of your paper.
- Share your writing with your audience.

# Writing a Short Story

A story, also called a narrative, must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. It can be real or fiction, it can be many pages or just a few, and it can be set in your everyday life or on another planet. This chapter will guide you as you create a story.

## LESSON 1

## Develop Ideas



To get started writing your short story, find an **idea** and generate **details** about it. After that, plan your **plot**.

### Tip

Here are some ideas for your short story:

- a day when nothing goes right
- time travel
- a team's struggle to win
- a conflict between best friends
- a literary character coming to life

### Questions to Ask as You Develop Story Ideas

- **Which idea would be fun to write about?** You may want to base your story on something that happened to you, such as an experience that frightened you or made you proud. Or you may want to create new people, new places, or even a new universe.
- **For whom am I writing?** Consider what your audience would find entertaining or moving. You may need to explain certain terms or ideas to them.
- **Why am I writing?** An effective story must be entertaining, but it may entertain through humor, suspense, action, or drama.
- **What message am I sending?** You may want your story to have a **theme**—an underlying message that you communicate to your reader but don't state directly.

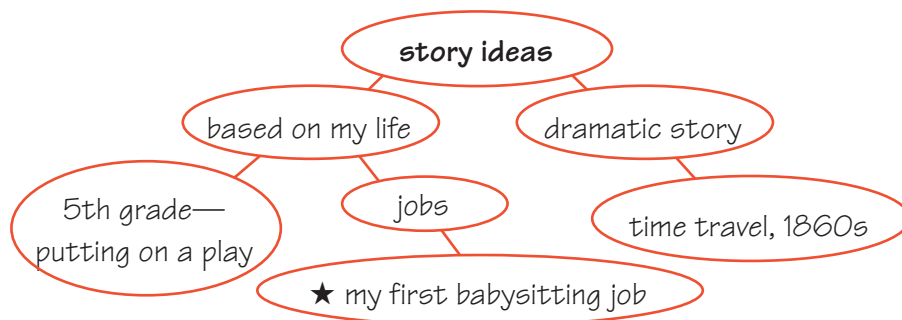
Getting started may be the hardest part of writing a short story.

### To focus on an idea and gather details, try. . .

- ✓ freewriting for three minutes without stopping
- ✓ brainstorming story ideas with classmates
- ✓ creating a list or a Cluster Diagram

See below for an example of a Cluster Diagram.

Notice how the ideas start out general and become specific.



Once you decide on an idea, figure out the details of the **plot**—the events that happen in the story. You can create a flow chart, or you can use a **Story Map** like this one.

<b>Main Characters:</b> Jess, a 13-year-old girl Stella, a 3-year-old girl Stella's mom	<b>Setting:</b> Old house in a small town
<b>Conflict:</b> Jess is babysitting for Stella, who won't go to sleep because of "monsters" in her closet.	
<b>Plot Events:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mrs. Dombrowski hires Jess to babysit Stella.</li> <li>2. Stella is busy and happy until bedtime.</li> <li>3. Stella becomes frightened of "closet monsters."</li> <li>4. Jess invents "monster spray." It works!</li> <li>5. Jess has to decide whether to tell Mrs. Dombrowski.</li> </ol>	
<b>Resolution of Conflict:</b> Jess invents "monster spray." It works!	
<b>Theme (optional):</b> Sometimes it takes a creative solution to solve a problem.	

## Activity

Decide on an idea for a short story. On a separate sheet of paper, create a **Story Map** (like the one above) that describes the details of your story.



## LESSON 2

# Describe the Characters and Setting



Begin writing your story. Develop the **characters** (the people and animals in your story) and the **setting** (the place or places where your story is located).

## Tip

Sometimes your first attempt at a story doesn't work. If you need to, go back to the ideas you generated in Lesson 1 and choose another topic.

## Tips for Drafting Your Story

- ✓ **Choose a point of view.** Use the first-person point of view ("It was my first job") or the third-person point of view ("It was Jess's first job"). Don't switch confusingly from one to the other.
- ✓ **Introduce characters.** Include details about how a character looks, sounds, and acts. Try to show instead of tell. For instance, instead of writing, "I was nervous," write, "My eyes darted around the room, and my voice sounded squeaky when I tried to ask a question."
- ✓ **Include dialogue.** Put characters' words in quotation marks. Start a new paragraph each time the speaker changes. Use slang and even grammatical errors, if that's how the character would really talk.
- ✓ **Use sensory details to give your reader a "you are there" feeling.** What can the characters see, hear, smell, feel, and taste?
- ✓ **Stay organized.** Tell your story in chronological order, also called time or sequential order. Include such transitions as *first* and *then*.

See the Writing Model at the end of this chapter for an example.

**Activity A** Look back at the story map you created in Lesson 1. On a separate sheet of paper, list details for each item below.

- characters (main character, other characters, dialogue)
- setting (time, place, sensory details)
- plot events (in chronological order, with transition words)

**Activity B** On a separate sheet of paper, draft the first few pages of your story. Include some details from Activity A.

## LESSON 3

**Resolve the Conflict**

At the end of your story, **resolve the conflict** you introduced. In other words, provide a solution for the main problem of the story.

**Tip**

The conflict might change the main character's mind about an issue. It might teach the main character a lesson. It might even change the character's outlook on life.

The **conflict** is the problem the main character faces—the obstacle that stands in the way of the main character getting what he or she wants. A story without a conflict isn't a real story; it's a description.

**An effective ending to a story. . .**

- ✓ solves the story's central conflict
- ✓ follows a logical order
- ✓ shows that the main character has changed in some way
- ✓ avoids clichés, such as "Then I woke up and realized it was all a dream . . . or was it?"

**First Draft**

The kid was afraid that monsters would get her. I figured out something good. I told her that the air freshener was monster spray. I sprayed some in her closet, and she went right to sleep. I thought the mom might get mad at me, but she said it was fine. The End.

Simple language and few details make a boring conclusion.

To see the revised version, go to the Writing Model at the end of this chapter.

**Activity**

On a separate sheet of paper, draft the conclusion of your story. Make sure the story picks up where you left off in Lesson 2. Then exchange papers with a partner. Read and evaluate each other's work, using the checklist in this lesson as a guide.

## WORKSHOP

## Writing Model

## An excellent short story. . .

- ✓ begins in an intriguing, appealing, or thought-provoking way
- ✓ precisely describes setting and action
- ✓ uses well-chosen details to show what the characters are like
- ✓ includes realistic-sounding dialogue
- ✓ has a central conflict that affects the main character
- ✓ describes events in an order that makes sense; includes transitions
- ✓ concludes by showing how the main character has changed

Below is the final version of a short story. Ask your teacher how many pages your short story should be.

The first paragraph introduces the main character and the situation.

Dialogue and sensory details enliven the story.

Transitions tell the reader what happens when.

Dramatic statement introduces conflict.

### Jess and the Closet Monsters

It was Jess's first babysitting job—in fact, it was her first job of any kind. As she stood on the old wooden steps and knocked, she wondered how she would do.

"Hi, Jessica!" hollered Mrs. Doblewski as she flung open the red front door.

"Call me Jess," Jess croaked nervously.

"I've got Stella's evening aaaaalllll planned out," said Mrs. D. "Finger painting from 6:15 until 6:30, then cleanup and a snack—the crackers and juice are in the fridge. She usually likes to play with race cars around 6:50, and—"

Just then, three-year-old Stella appeared. "PLAY!" she insisted. "Play NOW!"

The early evening featured art projects, dolls, songs, and stories. Stella got bored quickly, but each new project made her cheerful again. At bedtime, she was yawning.

That's when the trouble started.

"Stella, it's time to brush your teeth and go to bed."

*continued*

**The order of events is logical.**

**Unlike informational paragraphs, story paragraphs do not need topic sentences.**

**The main character has an inner conflict.**

**The ending is surprising but believable.**

Stella's eyes widened. "Nooooooo! *Closet monsters!*" As well as a three-year-old can, she explained that several scary beings lived behind that closet door, and *no way* was she going to bed unless Mommy was home.

Jess was tired. She was frantic. She was still covered in finger paints. So she thought fast. She grabbed a can of air freshener from the bathroom.

"See this? It's Monster Spray. Mommy left it especially for you." Jess sprayed a little onto the closet floor. Roses—ick. "Monsters really, really hate this smell. This is the extra-strength stuff, so it will last till morning."

Stella believed. Stella slept. Jess felt great—until Mrs. D came home, saying, "Hi, Jessica! You look sleepy! How was my little angel?"

Jess felt terrible. She had lied to a little kid—to this woman's kid! She had made up a story, and now Stella would wail every night until she got Monster Spray. Could Jess pretend it never happened? No, she couldn't do that to Mrs. D. Instead, she told the truth.

"That was so creative!" Mrs. Doblewski squealed. "You're going to be the president of a babysitting company someday—either that or a novelist. Was it the air freshener with the pretty rose smell?"

Jess sighed in relief.

## **Assignment**

**Write a short story. You can use the notes you took in this chapter, or you can invent a new story.**