

Lesson 13 The Writing Process: Story

Now, it is time to put the parts of your story together. Think about the story you are about to tell. Use the story map on this page to list the important parts of your story.

Character(s)

Setting

Plot: Beginning

Plot: Middle

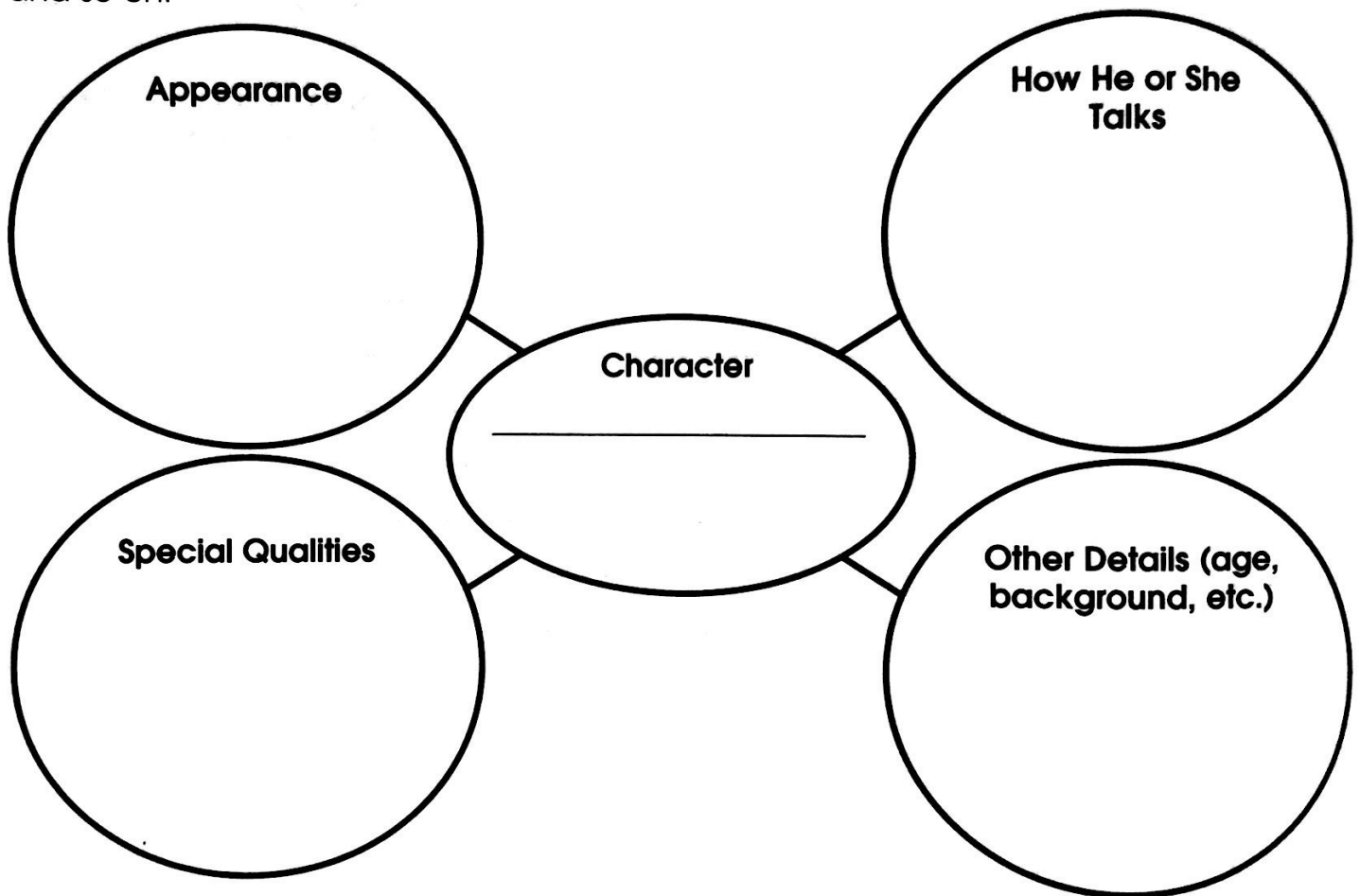
Plot: End

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Some story writers like to use settings and situations they have experienced themselves. Others like to go beyond themselves and use exaggeration to create funny, often wild, worlds. Use the writing process and see what kind of world you can create.

Prewrite

Look again at the story ideas you wrote on pages 50 and 51. Choose one of those ideas, or another idea that you like, and begin to develop it. Whether you are writing a realistic story or a tall tale, you will need to pay special attention to your main character. Use this idea web to record details about how he or she looks, acts, speaks, and so on.



Before you continue, consider these questions about your setting and plot.

- What is the setting of your story? Consider place or location, season, time of day, weather conditions, and so on.
- What is the character's problem?
- What does the character do to try to solve the problem? Does it take more than one try? What is the final solution or outcome?

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Revise

Every writer must look at his or her work with fresh eyes and figure out how to make the writing better. Even experienced writers do this, and no one considers it an easy job.

Answer the questions below. If you answer "no" to any of these questions, those are the areas you might need to improve. Write notes on your draft so you know what needs attention. Ask a friend to read your draft and answer the questions, too.

- Did you give details about an interesting character and a setting?
- Did you include a problem and a solution in your plot?
- Did you tell events in an order that made sense? Did you use transition and time words?
- Did you create pictures in your readers' minds with vivid adjectives and adverbs?
- If you wrote a tall tale, did you stretch details to make them funny?
- Did you use dialogue to help readers learn about characters and to move the story forward? Does dialogue help the reader understand how characters respond to events and to each other?
- Did you describe how things look, sound, smell, feel, and taste?
- Does your story include a good ending?

Now, review the important parts of a story.

- In the beginning of a story, readers meet the characters and learn a little about the setting and the plot. The first sentence of a story should make readers want to keep on reading.
- In the middle of a story, the action takes place. Readers see the character or characters face a problem. The characters probably make one or more attempts to solve the problem.
- In the end, the characters solve the problem in a logical way. Remember, it is not satisfying to read a story in which a big problem just goes away by magic.

On your draft, draw brackets around the beginning, middle, and end of your story. Write some notes if you decide that you must change any of those parts to make them more interesting for your readers.

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Proofread

Now, correct those last little mistakes. Proofreading is easier if you look for just one kind of error at a time. So, read through once for capital letters. Read again for end punctuation. Read a third time for spelling errors. Here is a checklist to help you proofread your revised story. Ask a friend to proofread your writing, too.

- ___ Each sentence begins with a capital letter.
- ___ Each sentence ends with the correct punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point).
- ___ Dialogue is punctuated correctly.
- ___ Each sentence states a complete thought.
- ___ All words are spelled correctly.

When proofreaders work, they use certain symbols. Using these symbols makes their job easier. These symbols will make your job easier, too.

- Three little lines under a letter mean that the letter should be capitalized.
- Write in missing end marks like this: ◦ ? !
- "Please add a comma and quotation marks," she said.
- Fix incorrect or misspelled words like ^{this} ~~these~~.

Use these symbols as you proofread your story. Remember to read your writing out loud, even if there is no one to listen. When you read out loud, you may hear mistakes or rough spots that you did not see.

Publish

Write a final copy of your story on separate sheets of paper or make final changes to your computer document. Write or type carefully so there are no mistakes. If you wish, add illustrations and share your story with friends. With an adult's permission, post your story on a good Web site for children's writing (but do not include your name).