

# WISPS

Remember:

You don't have to follow the WISPS rule every time you write a story. It's just there as a guideline for when you can't think of what to write or how to finish a story. Likewise, you don't have to start every story with the weather but if you can't think of where to begin, it's a great place to start...



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# WEATHER

- 1) Writing about the weather instantly sets the scene and starts building an image in the reader's mind.
- 2) It's the easiest place to start a story because wherever your story is set, there will always be weather. Additionally, we've all experienced the weather and understand what it's like to be hot, cold, shivering or sweating - it's something all writers can use, whether they're writing a horror story or love story.
- 3) You can make your opening as descriptive as you like when you write about the weather.
- 4) Writing about the weather tells the reader a lot about your story – it tells them what time of year it is, it gives them clues about where it is set (in the rainforest, a desert or the arctic), and it sets the mood for the rest of the story.

## Tips:

You might like to describe a thunderstorm, a sunrise or sunset, a clear day in spring, a stifingly hot day, an overcast and cloudy morning, a snowy setting, or a night-time scene with twinkling stars and a light breeze.



# INTRODUCE THE CHARACTER

1) Introducing the character is one of the most important parts of a story. If there is no character for the reader to relate to, they won't connect with the story.

2) Introducing a character gives the reader someone to identify with. They might feel sorry for them, or they might find them funny, scary, intimidating or endearing.

3) Introducing a character brings your ideas to life. It gives the story some heart and encourages the reader to become invested in the story you're telling.

Tips:

Don't just focus on what the character looks like. This is arguably the least important thing when introducing a character, as we can find out what they look like as the story progresses. Instead, focus on what the character is:

- 1) Feeling
- 2) Thinking
- 3) Doing

This will bring the character to life a lot more than simply describing what they look like.



# SENSES

- 1) Write about what the character can see, hear, smell, taste and touch (the 5 senses).
- 2) This is where you can use lots of description e.g. 'She can hear the waves crashing on the shore, she could hear seagulls squawking overhead, and she could feel the rough sand beneath her feet.' This is much more interesting than just saying, 'she went to the beach'.
- 3) This is called the 'Show, Don't Tell' rule. Try to SHOW the reader where your character is rather than telling them. It makes your story a lot more interesting and descriptive.

Tips:

You might like to play the 'Show, Don't Tell' / 'Setting' game to help you understand this rule and think more descriptively.



# PROBLEM

- 1) Every story should have a problem for the main character to overcome. Sometimes it's referred to as a 'dilemma'.
- 2) Without a problem, there will be no action, drama or suspense. A problem moves the story along and keeps the reader engaged.
- 3) Most stories have one major problem running throughout the story, and lots of minor problems that crop up along the way. Start off with just one major problem, and then gradually build more in as you get more confident.

## Tips:

You might like to play the 'What's Your Problem?' game to think of some problems and feel less overwhelmed when it comes to planning or starting your story.

Problems can be both big and small. Your character could be lost or trapped, they could lose something, they could have an argument with their friend, they could be chased by a dragon, they could fail a test, etc.



# SOLVE

1) A story with a good structure has a strong ending.

2) Most stories end with the main character solving their problem, defeating the enemy or overcoming obstacles, but not all stories need to have a solution. Some can end on a cliffhanger.

3) Keep the idea of a 'problem' and 'solving the problem' in mind when planning your work. It makes the process seem less daunting and means you need to ask three simple questions...

- Who is your character?
- What is their problem?
- How do they solve it?

Tips:

See our 'PPS Plan' on the Authorfy Approaches page for how to use the above three questions in a quick and easy story plan.



<p>W</p>	<p><b>WEATHER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the weather like at the start of the story?</li> <li>- Think about how the weather could help set the scene.</li> </ul>	
<p>I</p>	<p><b>INTRODUCE THE CHARACTER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who is the main character?</li> <li>-What do they look like?</li> <li>- Where are they at the start of the story?</li> <li>- What are they thinking / feeling?</li> </ul>	
<p>S</p>	<p><b>SENSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What can the character see, hear, smell, taste and touch?</li> <li>-Try to include some really descriptive sentences!</li> </ul>	
<p>P</p>	<p><b>PROBLEM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What goes wrong in the story?</li> <li>- What does the character want that they can't get?</li> <li>- What makes the story exciting?</li> </ul>	
<p>S</p>	<p><b>SOLVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How will the story end?</li> <li>- Will the character get what they want?</li> <li>- Will it be a happy ending?</li> </ul>	