

Basic Situation

- The beginning introduces the characters, the setting, and the conflict.
- The author starts strong with dialogue.
- The point of view is third person limited. The narrator can only tell us about the thoughts and feelings of one character.
- Dialogue is used to keep the story interesting.

Rising Action

- The rising action adds a conflict for the characters.
- The writer uses specific showing details so the reader can visualize the characters and the setting.
- The writer describes the action using a variety of specific details.

Climax

- This is the point when the main character confronts her problem.

Resolution

- The ending suggests that the main character has changed.

Just Keep Going . . .

“Why don’t you take a break, Celia?” Shaundra shouted above the pounding beat of the dance music. “You’ve been serving punch all night. Aren’t you going to dance?”

“No,” Celia shot back. “I mean, sure. Of course I’m going to dance.” She ran her thumb up the stack of party napkins. “But we’ve been really busy. People get thirsty, dancing.”

“Yeah, and people who aren’t dancing need something to do.”

Celia watched the ice bob in the bowl. “Nobody’s asked me.”

“Girl, you think this is the ‘90’s? You’ve got to do the asking.” Shaundra took the ladle from Celia’s hand and nodded across the gym. “Jerome’s been waiting for you all night.”

Celia’s eyes grew wide. “You better not have told him I like him!”

“Maybe I did. Maybe I didn’t. If you don’t ask him, you’ll never know.”

Drawing a deep breath, Celia clenched her fists beside her hips. How could she bear to ask Jerome to dance? She stared out across the crowded basketball court to see him leaning against the folded bleachers.

Jerome’s hair was shaved short, and he wore a button-down shirt with khaki pants. He was more dressed up than Celia had ever seen him.

“Well,” Shaundra said, “what’s your decision?”

Celia began to walk. The first step was the hardest. She felt like she was teetering on a tightrope. The music pounded in her chest. Halfway there, she wondered if she should veer off to the restroom, but something inside her said, “Just keep going.” Suddenly, she stood in front of Jerome.

He looked up, saw her, and smiled. “What’s up, Celia?” He was wearing cologne.

Celia shrugged, and she couldn’t think of a single thing to say. How was she going to get out of this one? Taking a deep breath, she blurted out, “You don’t want to dance, do you?”

Jerome’s smile grew broader. “Sure.” They walked together out to the free-throw line. The beat stopped. Celia and Jerome were left standing there, facing each other in dead silence. She wanted to sink into the floor. At last, the DJ started a slow song.

Jerome murmured, “So, I guess Shaundra told you I like you.”

Celia relaxed and smiled, “Maybe she did, and maybe she didn’t.”

Steps to Writing a Fictional Narrative (Short Story)

1. Read and understand the prompt or writing directions. What kind of story are you being asked to write?

Example:

Fictional Narrative Writing Task

In this writing test, you will write a fictional short story. Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- tell a story about a fictional event
- develop a plot with a beginning, middle, and end;
- develop a setting and characters;
- use appropriate strategies such as action, descriptive detail, and dialogue to make your story interesting; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

2. Decide on your topic. Come up with a character that has one strength and one weakness.

3. Create a conflict. What problem will the character face? How will he or she overcome this problem?

4. Set the scene. Where will your story take place? What specific sensory details can you include to show the reader your setting?

5. Plan the complications. What will be the sequence of events in the story? How will you connect the events so they flow smoothly together? How can you make the action of the story come alive?

6. Determine the climax. What will the character do to create tension in the story? Don't skimp on the climax. This should be the most exciting, thrilling, or meaningful moment in the story.

7. Wrap up with a resolution. How has the character changed? Does the ending flow naturally from the rest of the story?

8. Revise. Do you start strong? Do your first sentences focus on dialogue, conflict, setting, or character? Do you use vivid details to describe the setting, action, and characters? Did you include dialogue? Do the characters sound like real people? Do your sentences flow well? Do you use transitional words and phrases to connect ideas and events? Do you have paragraph breaks whenever there's a shift in time or place?

9. Proof read and edit. Check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Are you using consistent verb tense? Are the names of people and places spelled correctly and capitalized?

10. Write a final draft. Use blue or black ink. Skip lines. Write on one side of the paper only. Include an intriguing title on the first line.

11. Read your story one more time before you turn it in. Look for careless spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, especially omitted words or letters. Cross out errors neatly with a single line and write the correction above.