

## Plots and How to Create

### Technique 1: The Q. & A. Approach

Who? CHARACTER(S) How many? Good or bad or something in between? Their points of view, the concept of the protagonist?

What? CONFLICT. Without conflict – a problem to be resolved, or a decision to be made, some challenge to be overcome – there is no story.

When? TIME – contemporary or historical, be it knowledgeable, be it consistent.

Where? PLACE – location, setting. If it is real, be true to it. If it is unreal, make it seem truthful.

Why? MOTIVATION – ‘Plot springs from character’. Put this particular person in this situation and see what s/he will do.

How? THE RESOLUTION – sometimes called the denouement.

### Show, don't tell

Your characters will do and say things that show who they are and what they are dealing with in the context of your story. Don't explain this. Let them be who they are; do what they do, and say what they say – and show the reader through character, action & dialogue what is going on.

A good exercise is to rewrite your story outline as a storyboard – like a strip cartoon. The story progresses within each 'box' that records 'what happens next'. When you write it, develop each box from a phrase to a paragraph.

Good stories are all about show, not tell. Good stories set out to answering properly the writer's question, 'What if ...?' and the reader's question 'What next ...?'

Plot is progression – from conflict to resolution. But don't tell the reader that. Show the reader.

### Technique 2 A Story Triangle

This technique helps you to describe characters, events and problems. Follow these directions:

1. Name of main character.
2. Two words describing the main character.
3. Three words describing the setting.

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4. Four words describing the main problem.
5. Five words describing first problem.
6. Six words describing second problem.
7. Seven words describing third problem.
8. Eight words describing the solution.

Now complete the worksheet below to get your story going ...

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**Checklist**

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| I've decided what sort of short story I'm writing.             | Yes/No |
| I've worked out the conflict.                                  | Yes/No |
| I have a protagonist and an antagonist.                        | Yes/No |
| I've established a time and place for the action.              | Yes/No |
| I've structured my story with a clear beginning, middle & end. | Yes/No |
| I've resolved the conflict in a logical way.                   | Yes/No |
| I've identified my readership.                                 | Yes/No |
| I've used 'show, not tell' throughout.                         | Yes/No |
| I've added a tantalising title.                                | Yes/No |
| I've revised & edited my story constructively.                 | Yes/No |