

I'm often asked

HOW I WRITE A STORY

so here's how I do it!

by Simon Cheshire
author of a few books



Each writer works in a slightly different way.
I find that the best way to create a story is to plan it
carefully, before you even write the first sentence.

I plan my stories by asking myself four questions. I don't always ask
them in this order, but I do always answer them:

- 1** What is the **SETTING** for the story?
- 2** What **CHARACTERS** should be in
the story?
- 3** What is the **PLOT** of the story?
- 4** What is the **STYLE** of the story?

Let's look at **SETTINGS**...





What is the SETTING for the story?

In other words, WHERE and WHEN does it take place? In an ordinary house? At a school? On a spaceship? Does it take place in the past? Or today? Or in the future?

FOR EXAMPLE

Pick a 'where'...

- My school
- My best friend's house
- The park
- An airport
- A zoo
- My local supermarket
- France
- A tunnel under the ground
- An alien planet
- The beach
- A garden shed
- Up in the sky
- The Moon
- Inside a matchbox

Add a few suggestions of your own!

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Pick a 'when'...

- Yesterday
- Many years ago
- Today
- Next week
- My birthday
- The year 1972
- Ancient times
- The far future
- The day I was born
- Tudor times
- During World War II
- Right now

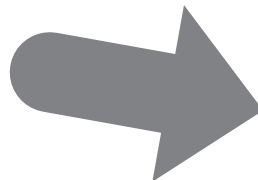
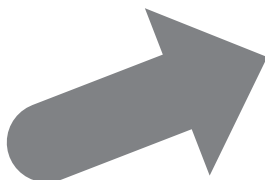
Add a few suggestions of your own!

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You've got a setting for a story!

QUESTIONS

Think about the books you have read recently. Where and when were they set?

If you wanted to write a story about a boy talking on his mobile phone, can you think of some settings which you COULDN'T use?

Let's look at CHARACTERS...





What CHARACTERS should be in the story?

In other words, WHO should be in the story? A boy? A girl? Lots of boys and girls? An old lady? A monkey with a ray gun? What would be a good name to give your main character?

FOR EXAMPLE

Here are some settings for stories. Think up some characters who might appear in these stories (and give them names)...

On the school playground, late at night...

Characters

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Characters

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London, in the year 1899...

A laboratory, in orbit around a distant planet...

Characters

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QUESTIONS

Choose a well-known story. Can you think of any new characters who might fit into that story?

What sort of things do you need to know about a character? What they wear? What they like to eat? How good they are at snakes and ladders? What do you think?

Let's look at PLOTS...



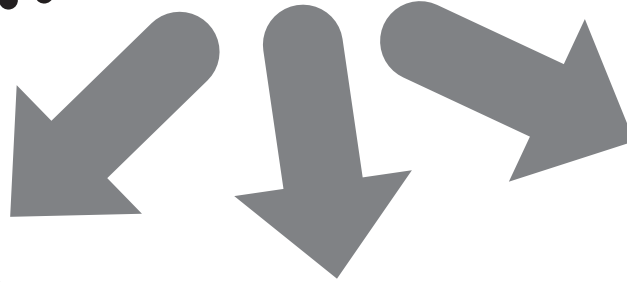


What is the PLOT of the story?

In other words, WHAT should happen in the story? And WHY? What is happening when the story starts? What happens to the characters? How does the story end?

FOR EXAMPLE

Here are some ideas for stories. Think of things which might happen in these stories...



A spy story!

A secret agent is trying to find messages hidden in an enemy's underground hideout!

First, THIS happens...

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Then, THIS happens...

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Finally, THIS happens...

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A fairy tale!

Prince Nice wants to marry Princess Lovely, but the princess would rather fight dragons!

First, THIS happens...

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Then, THIS happens...

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Finally, THIS happens...

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A school story!

It's Sports Day! The two best runners in 5B are both determined to win the big race!

First, THIS happens...

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Then, THIS happens...

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Finally, THIS happens...

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QUESTIONS

Choose a well-known story. Now change the plot! Can you think of some new ways to end the story? Or some new things which might happen?

Choose a story you've read recently. What happened in it? What was the plot of the story?

Let's look at STYLES...



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What is the STYLE of the story?

In other words, HOW should you tell your story? There are lots of different ways to tell a story. You could make it funny, or gloomy, or exciting...

FOR EXAMPLE

We all know the story Goldilocks And The Three Bears. But if you read this story in different books, you'll find it's a SLIGHTLY different story every time. Different writers tell the same story in different ways.

Here are three different styles. Write about Goldilocks waking up and seeing the bears, using these different styles...

Make it *Silly* 

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Make it *sad* 

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Make it **SPOOKY** 

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QUESTIONS

What sort of stories do you like to read? Scary stories? Funny stories? Romantic stories?

Think of a story you've read recently. What style is it written in? What might it be like in a different style?

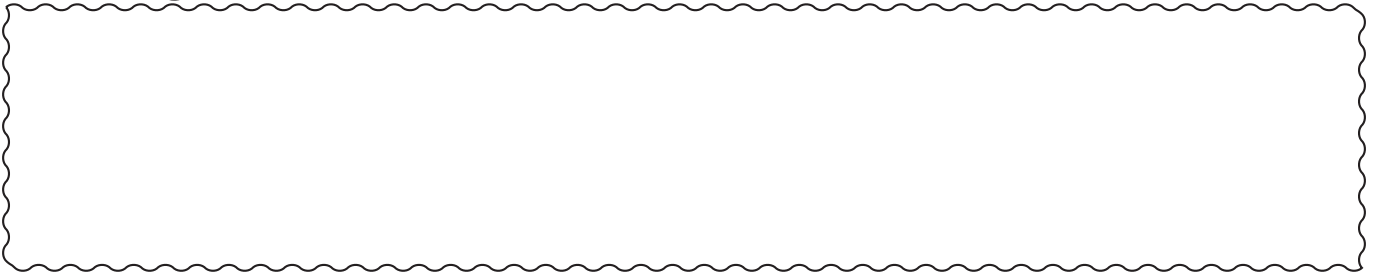
Let's plan a story... 

OK, you've heard what I do, now it's time for you to do your own

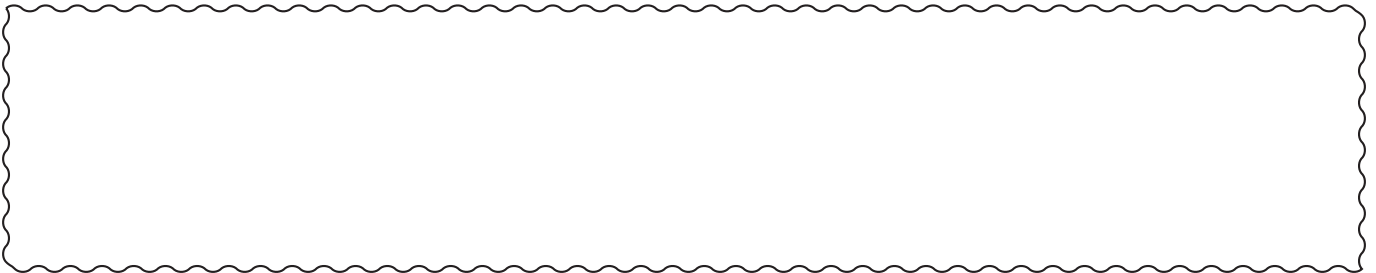
STORY PLANNER

Name

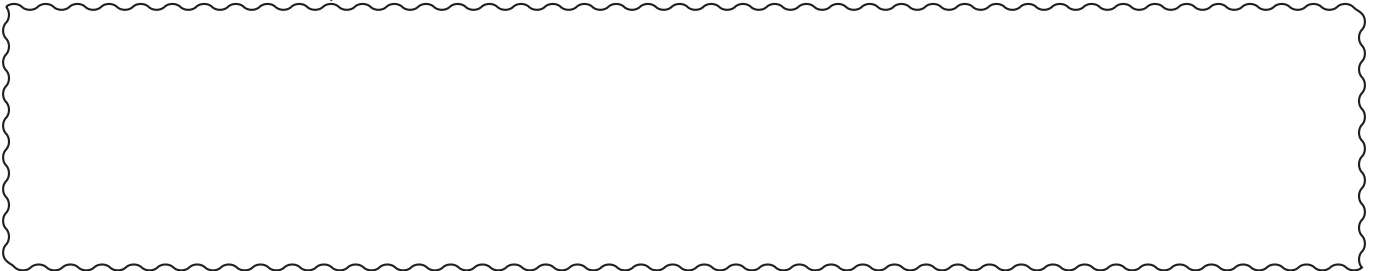
Setting? (where and when)



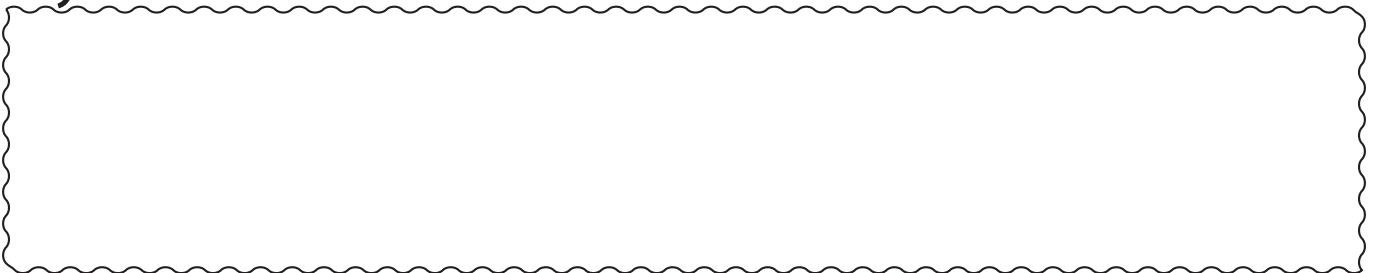
Characters? (who)



Plot? (what and why)



Style? (how)



Title?

Now... Get writing!