



Story Planner

Introduction

This resource is intended as a sounding board to help with the planning, structuring, writing, and deepening of stories. It can be used before a single word has been committed to paper or it can be used during the editing stages. It presents a list of questions to get you thinking about your story from every angle. Not every question will be pertinent to every piece. Some questions will provide answers that don't make it onto the page in any way. But hopefully the act of answering the questions will highlight what your story is lacking as well as opportunities for enhancement. There are many more questions beyond what is presented here, but hopefully this covers the basics of narrative, character, emotions and tension, and gets you thinking in different ways.



NARRATIVE

What is the story about in a single sentence?

This is a story about...

When...

then...

What makes the story unique? How is it different to every other story that has been told before?

What changes in the story?

How does the story start? What is the inciting incident?

How does it end? What is the moment everything is building towards?

What has happened immediately prior to the story?

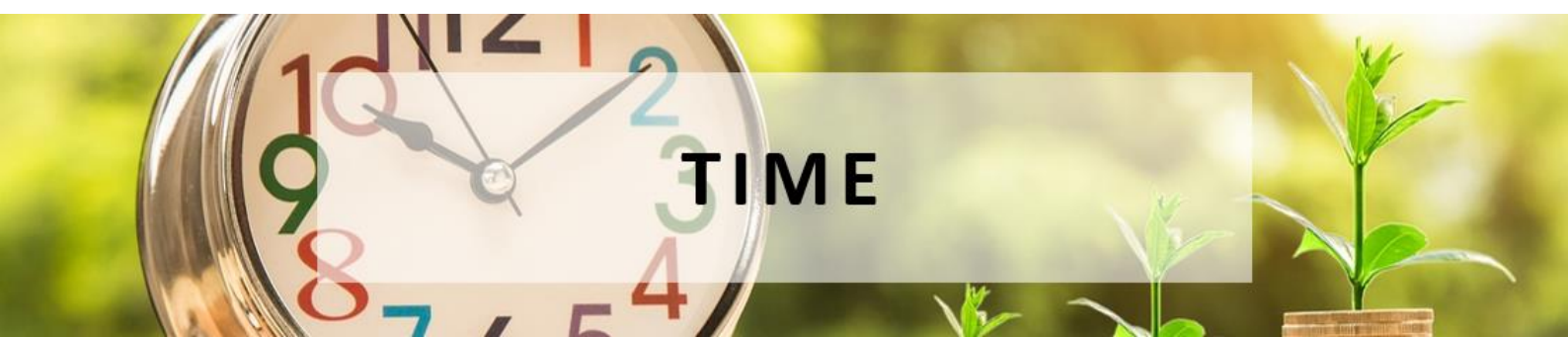
What is going to happen after the story ends?



Where is the story set?

What are the important sensory details that ground a reader?

How does the setting affect narrative, character and language choice?



When is the story set?

How much time passes during the story?

What is the chronology of the story?



TENSION

What is the tension within the story?

VS

VS

Is there a countdown in the story (a ticking clock)?



CHARACTERS

Who is / are the main character(s) in the story?

What is the one thing that makes them truly unique?

What are the main character's hopes and dreams?

What are their fears and burdens?

What is the main character's specific motivation in the story? What do they want? Why?

What are the barriers to them getting what they want?

How does the character change during the story?



RELATIONSHIPS

Who is / are the main relationships(s) in the story?

What defines this relationship?

How did they meet?

How does the relationship change during the course of the story?



What is the emotional journey travelled from beginning to end?

What is the emotional zenith?

How do your characters express these emotions? Unique body language? Internal thought? Dialogue?



What is the tone of the story?

Who is the narrator?

How does narrative / character affect the voice?



What themes are present in the story?

What is the hidden truth beneath the narrative? A proverb? A philosophical question explored?



ENDNOTE

Bio:

This resource has been created by Matt Kendrick. Matt is a writer, editor and teacher based in the East Midlands, UK. His short fiction has been widely published both online and in print. He has been placed or listed in various writing competitions including Bath, Flash 500, the Oxford Flash Fiction Prize, Reflex and Leicester Writes. His work has been included on the Biffy 50 list for 2019-20, in Best Microfiction 2021, Best Small Fictions 2022 and the Wigleaf Top 50 list for 2022. He has also been nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize.

Other Resources:

For links to other free resources, please visit my website: <https://www.mattkendrick.co.uk/resources>

Services and Courses:

Information about my [courses](#) and [editorial services](#) can also be found on my website.



Support me on Ko-fi

As a workshop facilitator, I am committed to opening up writing opportunities to people from all backgrounds based on ability to write rather than ability to pay. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to finance pay-what-you-can and free spots exclusively from my own pocket. So, if you've downloaded this resource and are in a position to support narrowing the access gap to creative writing opportunities, I would be very grateful if you would consider buying me a virtual coffee*.

**Any money donated to my [Ko-fi page](#) will be used to fund free and reduced-price places for my Write Beyond The Lightbulb courses, as well as to provide free editing and mentoring opportunities for low-income writers, and to support other opportunities that seek to level the playing field.*