

Creative Writing

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Some links at the end of each article may or may not work.

1. Creative Writing Tips - Have You Established Your Main Character At The Start?

by: Nick Vernon

In the beginning of your story you have to grab your readers' interest and sustain it till the end. Our hook is our character. Readers keep on reading to find out more about the character. To see what he'll do in the story; how he'll solve his problems. What his goals are and whether he'll achieve them.

And because our character is the reason readers become hooked on our stories, establishing him at the start is a must in a short story. And it is essential to establish him at the start because we don't have the capacity in our limited word length to introduce him at our leisure.

The bond between readers and character has to be developed almost immediately.

You might have a few characters though. How do you decide who your main character will be? A main character is one that drives the story.

Think of it this way... If we were to take him away, there will be no story because it's his story we are telling. The story will unfold by what is happening or what has happened to him.

When you establish who your main character will be, the next thing to do is to find which of your characters is in the best position to tell the story. Will your main character tell his story or will you give that role to another character?

This is what we call Viewpoint and what we'll see in more detail in proceeding chapters.

Your main character isn't necessarily the one who is telling the story; he might not even appear in our story 'physically' but will be there through the thoughts of others. So the viewpoint character might be a secondary character.

Whoever is telling the story is the viewpoint character.

The viewpoint character gives the coloring of the story. Whatever this characters says, we will believe. It may or may not be true, according to the main character, but because he isn't there 'physically' to voice his opinions, we will have to take the viewpoint character's word for it.

In a novel you can play around with viewpoint. You can have several viewpoint characters. In a short story it works best with one.

So your main character, whether he'll be telling his own story or someone else will be doing it for him, has to be established at the start of your story.

Having said that, let's see the reasons why the main character may not be telling his own story...

- Perhaps our main character is one that readers won't sympathize or empathize with.
- Or the main character will not view highly with our readers
- Or the viewpoint character knows all the facts and can tell the story better
- Etc.

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Let me give you an example of a secondary character telling the story of a main character...

Let's say your secondary character is a psychiatrist and the main character is the patient. Depending on what's going to go on in the story, we'll have to choose who's in a better position to tell it. In this case, I will choose the psychiatrist.

I've done this because the patient is confused, being the one with the problems. The psychiatrist knows all the facts and his opinions will make things clearer to readers.

So, as the secondary character (the psychiatrist) unravels the story, we'll become involved in the main character because it's the main character's story that is being told.

This may get a little confusing to the beginner writer. As they write they will have to keep in mind that the secondary character, although he's telling the story, is NOT our main character.

The secondary character is there to do perform a task. He's only the voice. It's the main character we'll become involved with.

A secondary character doesn't play such an important role as a main character does. Therefore, information about secondary characters should be kept to a minimum. It's not his story – it's the main character's story and the spotlight must, most times, be kept on the main character.

Take the above example for instance. It's no relevance to the story how the psychiatrist started his career or where he received his diploma – what's important, is what he has to say about the main character, his patient.

Introduce your main character straight away, as close to the beginning of the story that's possible. Enable your readers to form a bond and that will keep them hooked.

Is your main character established at the start of your story?

## **2. A Guide to Creative Writing That Sells**

**by: Caterina Christakos**

It's unbelievable that with all the creative writing courses out there, that no one teaches the necessity of researching your market before you set pen to paper.

Yes, we all want to be creative and let our imagination go. At the same time, wouldn't it be great to have some of your work published? Even better wouldn't it be awesome to know that you have upped your chances of getting published by around 80% by simply doing a tiny bit of browsing in a library or bookstore?

Here is a way to make sure that there is an interest in your type of story before you pick up a pen or pull out your laptop:

- 1) Go to the local bookstore and read the writing magazines. Editors actually tell these magazines what they are interested in, in a fairly timely manner. Most of the guess work is taken out for you. You know which editors are looking for what type of stories.
- 2) Look at the current Writer's Guide. It is filled with editors and publishers looking for fresh material. And guess what? They also tell you what each editor wants and what they are sick to death of.
- 3) Check out the bookshelves to see which children's books are featured. Is there a trend or pattern? For example the last few years Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl and Charlie Bone have all been hot. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out that magical characters have taken kids and editors by storm.
- 4) Ask kids what their favorite books are. Ask them why they like one over the other. Ask if their friends are into the same books. Model these themes.

There is no need to make over the wheel or hire a psychic to figure out what publishers, editors and your audience - kids, are looking for. Gather this information and apply it to your writing.

Watch the number of your submissions rise, while your rejection letters become few and far between.

### **About The Author**

Caterina Christakos is the author of *How to Write a Children's Book in 30 Days or Less* and countless articles both on and off the net. For easy tips on how to write a children's book go to: <http://www.howtowriteachildrensbook.com>.

### **3. Article Writing: How To Use Your Chakra Energy To Write** **by: Ron Passfield**

The seven Chakras are the hidden energy centres in your body through which you receive, process and transmit life energies. They act as "energy transformers" and influencers of change.

Your thoughts, emotions or actions can either block or activate these hidden energy centres. In this article, I address ways to activate each of the Chakras to improve your article writing.

#### 1. Base Chakra – the energy of existence

This energy source is associated with survival, self-preservation and security. The major blockages to activating the Base Chakra are "self-sabotage" or self-talk that is full of self-doubt. The real tragedy is that, unless you can manage these self-doubts, you cut yourself off from the other six sources of energy.

You can activate the Base Chakra by: \* Confronting your doubts as self-sabotage and challenging them \* Visualising your completed article and the sense of achievement you will experience with publication \* Sharing your concerns with others who have been successful in article writing \* Listening to your body and learning to release any tensions associated with article writing

#### 2. Naval Chakra – the energy of activity

This source of energy is experienced as "excitement" and is associated with doing, movement, creativity and achievement. The major blockage to this energy source is inactivity brought on by procrastination and self-doubt.

You can activate the Naval Chakra by: \* Checking out online forums and article directories for potential topics of interest to readers \* Making notes on an article topic \* Aiming for a rough first draft (do not let your perfectionist streak intervene!) \* Trying "speed writing" - write what comes to mind without concern for grammar, sentence structure or spelling (helps to thwart perfectionism) \* Taping your ideas - try using an audio tape to get ideas down

#### 3. Solar Plexus Chakra – the energy of control

This energy is experienced as "clarity" and is associated with your sense of personal power and self control. The major blockage to this energy source is a lack of order through the absence of planning. You can tap into the energy of control by creating order, structure, form or guidance.

You can activate the Solar Plexus Chakra by: \* Capturing potential article topics in a document or Excel file \* Matching your task to your energy level – if you are a "morning person" do your creative writing in the morning and your related routine tasks at night \* Capturing ideas on how to write articles and creating your own set of guidelines \* Setting up documents on your computer with article headings and doing

occasional “brain dumps” \* Building your own list of preferred article directories for submission of articles (include submission URL and key requirements, eg. word length, format) \* Establishing output targets and a routine for article writing

#### 4. The Heart Chakra – the energy of community

This energy is experienced as “connection” - brought about by your relationships with others and by engaging them in collaborative activity. The major blockage to this energy source is “isolation” – cutting yourself off from supportive relationships.

You can engage the Heart Chakra by: \* Participating in discussion forums focused on article writing \* Developing a “learning partnership” with one other person for your mutual benefit \* Connecting to other people through workshops and teleconferences \* Sharing your article ideas with a “significant other” – your life partner, for example \* Taking time out to be with your friends \* Joining an action learning group devoted to article writing

#### 5. The Throat Chakra – the energy of meaning

This energy is experienced as expression and is associated with metaphors, communication and beliefs. The blocks to this form of energy are unclear thinking and a lack of focus.

You can engage your Throat Chakra by: \* Journaling to capture your thoughts and reflections \* Drawing diagrams and flowcharts to clarify what you are trying to say in your writing \* Developing concept maps to clarify the relationships amongst activities, ideas & principles \* Using metaphors to create new perspectives and meanings

#### 6. The Third Eye Chakra – the energy of integration

This energy is experienced as intuition and is associated with left and right brain, integration of male and female, wisdom and holistic approaches. One of the major blocks to this form of energy is “busyness” – incessant activity with no time for reflection.

You can engage your Third Eye Chakra by: \* Undertaking creative activity – e.g. painting, drawing or writing poetry \* Being still – getting in touch with nature and your own body \* Taking a walk – physical activity provides a good balance for sitting and writing \* Clearing the clutter from your desk and your life – a cluttered workspace can clutter your mind

#### 7. The Crown Chakra – the energy of Spirit

This energy is experienced as transcendence and is associated with higher purpose, vision and higher consciousness. The major block to this energy is an obsession with Materialism.

You can embrace the Crown Chakra by: \* Meditating – this helps you get in touch with your higher consciousness \* Singing – helps you to find your deeper self \* Revisiting

your spiritual origins – this may be through prayer or participation in religious activities  
The Chakras are interconnected and interdependent. They embrace the whole person – the irrational and rational, the intuitive and emotional, the pragmatic and the aesthetic and the material and spiritual.

You can activate your Chakras to improve your article writing and your daily living.

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### **About The Author**

This article is written by Ron Passfield, PhD, affiliate marketing coach, who is developing his affiliate business through the step-by-step coaching offered by the Affiliate Classroom: <http://www.affiliate-marketing-coach.blogspot.com/>.

Subscribe to Ron's weekly "Emarketing Strategies" ezine and receive a bonus gift: <http://www.emarktingstrategies.blogspot.com/>.

## **4. Beginnings**

**by: Rita Marie Keller**

Just about everyone is familiar with this beginning: “In the beginning God created the heavens and earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep . . .” (Genesis 1: 1-2 RSV) In a sense we’re playing God when we write a story. We create the characters, plot, and setting, turning a blank page—nothingness—into a compelling story.

Not only is your first scene the first impression of a story, it is the doorway that invites your reader on a journey. First scenes are what determine whether or not your reader is going to follow your characters to the end.

Your beginning must accomplish several things:

Introduce your characters

Establish the place and time the story occurs

Introduce the conflict or point at which change begins.

Your opening sets the tone, mood, situation or problem. It actually begins in the middle of things.

Looking at the first lines of Genesis from a purely literary standpoint, the first lines introduce God as the protagonist. The time and setting (simply) is the moment of Creation, same as the point of change. Before God created the world there was nothing. For the purpose of this illustration from a literary standpoint, Nothing was what happened before the story begins. It starts in *medius res*—in the middle of things.

Let’s look at a few opening lines of other stories.

I could tell the minute I got in the door and dropped my bag, I wasn’t staying. “Medley”  
by Toni Cade Bambara

This blind man, an old friend of my wife’s, he was on his way to spend the night.  
“Cathedral” by Raymond Carver

She told him with a little gesture he had never seen her use before. “Gesturing” by John Updike

Something has already happened before the opening line. The first line is actually the middle of the story. Each story has its own history. The plot is affected by something that happened before the first sentence on the first page. In Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter’s book, *What If?* They describe story beginnings: “. . . think of the story as a straight line with sentence one appearing somewhere beyond the start of the line—ideally near the middle. At some point, most stories or novels dip back into the past, to the beginning of the straight line and catch the reader up on the situation—how and why X has gotten himself into such a pickle with character Y.”

Take out an old story, or one you've been working on. Look at the opening scene. As yourself: Does the story have a past? Is the current conflict grounded in the history of the story? If you answer no, then you don't know your story's past well enough.

John Irving said: "Know the story—as much of the story as you can possibly know, if not the whole story—before you commit yourself to the first paragraph. Know the story—the whole story, if possible—before you fall in love with your first sentence, not to mention your first chapter.

### **About The Author**

Rita Marie Keller has written and published numerous short stories, articles, and essays. Her novel, *Living in the City* was released September 2002 by [Booklocker.com](http://Booklocker.com), Inc. She founded the Cacoethes Scribendi Creative Writing Workshop in 1999.

## 5. Can Your Theme Be Proved In Your Story?

by: Nick Vernon

Creative Writing Tips –

Your theme has to be something you can prove in your story - It doesn't have to be a universal truth. This means that your theme doesn't have to be something that happens in real life all the time (providing our logic can accept it, in order for us to believe it).

Whatever story you choose to write, be it a contemporary or a story which requires elements of fantasy such as in horror, science fiction etc... the events of that story have to appear logical.

What is not logical and consequently not believable is...

A character that has no knowledge of computers and overnight becomes a computer whiz

A car that goes over a cliff, bursts into flames and the character manages to escape unscratched

Etc

These are not believable because they can't and don't happen in real life and our logic doesn't accept them.

Your theme will be believed when you prove it (providing of course you can.) Let's see how you can do that.

We'll start with a theme...

‘Hard work leads to success.’

Our story is about a character whose goal is to reach a managerial position within the company that he works. For the reader to see how the character will reach his goal I will show him...

- Working hard
- Working long hours
- Using his initiative
- Being responsible

And all those qualities, in the end, will secure him the promotion he has been aiming for.

So my theme here will be proved that ‘Hard work leads to success’ because my character succeeds in the end.

>From the examples I have given so far, you may have noticed that my stories end on a happy note. Yours don't have to. The ending will depend on the story you are writing and how you, the writer, prefers to end it.

I could have done the reverse with this theme. I could have said,

“Hard work doesn’t lead to success.”

My story will be the same but in the end I will have the character missing out on the promotion. Both themes will be proved because I have proved them in my story.

Any theme can work in a story providing you can prove it.

Have you proved your theme?

### **About The Author**

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers’ funny stories.

Visit <http://www.we-recommend.com>

## **6. Documenting Everything: Your Journal is Your Logbook**

**by: Stephen Earley Jordan, II**

Sailors had it for years. Great explorers had it as well. If you go on an expedition to an ancient Aztec mound, more than likely the archaeologist will have one too - so, why shouldn't you own one?

No, I'm not speaking of the scurvy that plagued the sailors! No, I'm not speaking of the Loch Ness Monster or Bigfoot, whom explorers claimed to have seen in snowy Manitoba winters. Nor am I speaking of a lost city, which was never truly lost, but simply buried under mounds of earth and recently dug up by an archaeologist.

I'm speaking of journals. Journals? Yes! Keeping a journal can be just as much of an adventure as sailing the high seas, exploring unknown Canadian wilderness or digging in the dirt to find buried treasure.

Journals have been a source of reflection for centuries. My suggestion is to look at your writing career as if you're an explorer analyzing new-found land; an archaeologist digging up new artifacts and renaming them and so on...

How can you do this? Well, view your journal as a logbook and document your daily happenings. Here is a suggested format for keeping your captain's log.

Divide your journal entries into sections: Date, Weather, Mood, Events and Freewrite

1. Date: This is the obvious one (for some people). Write the month, day and the year. Also write which day of the week it is (i.e., December 17, 2001; Monday).

2. Weather: Make note of the temperature outside. Is it 100 degrees? Or perhaps it's only 20 degrees? Is it raining and 35 degrees? Snowing and 110 degrees? Raining cats and dogs? (Don't step in a poodle....)

3. Mood: What's going on in your head? Did you just get off the phone with your ex-lover who ruined your day and sank you into the depths of depression? Write about it. Did you manage to pull off some wondrous passive-aggressive revenge against said ex-lover? Write about that too and how it made you feel.

4. Events: Here's where things get a bit complicated - for some. You have to do your homework. Watch television, read the newspaper and write a few lines about what's going on in your city, state, country or the world in general.

5. Freewrite: Here's your chance to shine. Since we're all writers, we should leave a section for freewriting. Allow yourself some space to simply write aimlessly without direction. But, here's the challenge - try to limit yourself to a certain number of lines.

When you keep these entries for a week, two weeks or a longer period of time, it can be extremely beneficial. Comparing and contrasting the Mondays or Tuesdays could be a surprising learning experience.

Many times I've written stories and wanted to "know" what 78 degrees felt like, so I

went to my journal and found an entry, read my mood descriptions and weather descriptions and was easily informed from my own documentation.

Keep in mind, a good writer documents everything - whether it be on paper or just in the mind's filing cabinet. But, to keep things in order, try to keep your documentation on paper - or at least saved to disk.

### **About The Author**

Stephen Jordan, a medical editor, has five years experience within the educational publishing industry. Stephen was a freelance editor with such educational foundations as Princeton Review, The College Board, New York University, and Columbia University. Away from the office, Stephen promotes his creative writing with his home-freelance business OutStretch Publications and his artwork. Stephen holds two Bachelor of Arts degrees in writing and literature from Alderson-Broaddus College of Philippi, West Virginia.

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## **7. Does Each Element of Your Story Further The Theme?**

**by: Nick Vernon**

Creative Writing Tips –

Whichever theme you choose, all the elements, which make up your story, dialogue, conflict, scenes, etc should be written with the theme in mind.

Your theme should progress the story.

If you find that anything in your story doesn't progress it, it should be cut when you are in the editing stage.

Before we see an example of elements written with a theme in mind, let's think of a theme and a story....

The theme is...

'Arrogance Leads To Humiliation'

Very briefly, this story is about a character that believes he is better than his colleagues.

His goal is to get promoted to a managerial position. What will prevent him from reaching his goal, is the fact that management are aware of his arrogance and they don't believe, with his attitude, he is the right person to manage the staff.

To meet his goal, the character will take on more work than he can handle. He will do this to prove to management, that he is the right man for the job. But in the end, he will make a grave error and his arrogance will lead him to humiliation.

Now let's take a look at the elements of this story...

Dialogue

The character's dialogue will show his arrogance, by the tone of his voice and the words he chooses to express himself.

Characterization

I will show my character is arrogant by the way I describe him and from how other characters see him.

Motivations

I will explain what makes him think he is better than everyone else.

Goal

I will state his goal and show how it arises from the fact that he believes himself better than everyone else.

Setting

The setting is going to be in an office environment. I can show his arrogance through the setting by perhaps describing the contents of his desk (trophies) and his desk area in

general (diplomas on the walls.) etc.

### Conflict

The conflict will come from himself. He is the one that creates it by doing and saying things, which create dislike.

### Climax

The climax is the highest point in my story where the conflict and his arrogance will come to their peak. Here we will see how he tries to overcome the conflict and reach his goal by taking on more work.

### Ending

I will end my story with my character's humiliation. He takes on more work and makes an error in judgement. Which not only prevents his promotion but also gets him fired.

My theme here would have run its course.

Does each element of your story further your theme?

### **About The Author**

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories.

Visit <http://www.we-recommend.com>

## **8. Does Your Plot Suit Your Characters And Vice-Versa?**

**by: Nick Vernon**

Creative Writing Tips –

When an idea comes to us for a short story, we either think of a story line first or a character first. Whichever we think of first, and later on build, we have to make sure the plot and the character suit each other.

Example one – We think of a story line first.

Your story is set in a rural area. A company opens a factory and employs workers from that small town. The residents welcome this, as there aren't many jobs going around. The management takes advantage of that fact and exploit the workers.

Using a technicality in the system, perhaps listing them under different job titles in their books, they pay them less than they are entitled. Your main character sees this injustice and leads the workers to rebel against the management.

Now in a plot like this you will need your main character to possess certain qualities.

Like...

Leadership

To be able to lead the people to rebel.

Convincing

The workers are from a rural area. Some might be uneducated and not aware of their rights. The main character has to convince them that what the management is doing, is wrong.

Persuader

Living in a rural area, jobs are hard to find. Most of the workers will view the company as their savior. Their thinking will be that receiving little money is better than none at all. The main character has to persuade them that being in a rural area the company needs them as much as the workers need the company.

Strong Personality & Confident

We need a strong character that will see things through to the end. We don't want someone giving up when things get tough. He will also need to be confident that he is doing the right thing (not to make things worse for the workers) and believes in himself (knowing what he's doing is right).

Strong people skills

To be able to speak and relate to people on all levels.

Negotiator

To negotiate a solution with management and workers.

## Public speaker skills

To be able to address this mass group of workers, in a voice that is confident, persuading, authoritative etc.

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So these are the qualities we will need our character to have.

Now let's see if we can make him believable. Remember he lives in the same rural area, so what makes him different from the rest of the workers who are willing to settle for less?

I could say he recently move to that rural area from the city. He used to work as a union leader and wanted to get out of the rat race. But having fought for workers rights his entire career, he can't stand now to see injustices and comes to the decision to fight for them and himself.

So this character would suit our plot because we need someone like him for our story.

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## Example two – Thinking of a character first

We notice a man on the street. Something about him triggers our interest so we decide to write about him in a short story. So at this point we will build the character first and then work a story around him.

Let's go back to where we saw him...

He's walking briskly along a busy street. He's in a hurry. He's dressed in a three-piece suit, which indicates he might be a businessman. He's got a stack of documents under his arm; a briefcase in his left hand and his right hand is occupied by holding the phone to his ear, which he's shouting into.

Let's observe him closer...

He's in his mid thirties. He looks authoritative. Perhaps he has his own business. Why is he shouting into the phone? Perhaps one of his employees made a mistake, which has cost the character a lot of money.

What if this employee made the mistake on purpose? What if he's secretly working for the opposition, planted to destroy the main character's company? What if the owner of that opposing company is the main character's own brother? Etc...

So as we analyze this character and ask questions about him, our plot begins to unfold.

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Plots and characters have to suit each other.

When we have finished plotting and are ready to write the story, they shouldn't be ill-fitting pieces of a puzzle – They should be a perfect match.

Does your plot suit your characters and vice-versa?

About The Author

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories.

Visit <http://www.we-recommend.com>

9. Does Your Story Have A Theme?

by: Nick Vernon

Creative Writing Tips –

It should.

A theme is a one-line explanation of your story.. Every story should have one because our stories are about something.

When I say should, I mean that this isn't always the case. Especially so for beginner writers, who may not know, that the theme carries the story. Or even those who've been writing for years may not be aware of the importance of a theme.

And a theme is important.

A theme is what will keep you on track as you write the story.

What happens if you write without a theme in mind? Two things...

1. You stray from the subject

or

2. You write more than one story.

Let me give you an example of a story written with a theme in mind...

The theme to a story I once wrote was, 'Vanity Leads To Destruction.'

Very briefly, this story is about a female character that believed herself to be so beautiful, in the end she lost everything.

Writing this theme on a post-it note and sticking it on my computer, I was always reminded that my story had to revolve around this theme. Having a theme helped me stick to the story I had intended on writing and not stray from it – not even a little. It also helped me to focus only on what was essential to my story.

So according to my theme, 'Vanity Leads To Destruction' ...

- Every action my character performed was to show her vanity
- Her goals sprung from her vanity
- What motivated her was her vanity
- Her words (dialogue) showed her vanity
- How she handled situations showed her vanity
- The interaction with other characters showed her vanity
- The conflict was a result of her vanity
- The highest peak in my story, the climax, showed an intense moment of whether her goal would be met (whether her vanity would work for, or against her)
- And the ending? The ending showed how she was led to destruction because of her vanity

By following my theme, everything in my story was precise.

If I showed my character not being vain in any instance, then I would've strayed from my theme.

Does your story have a theme?

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If you didn't consciously write with a theme in mind, then your story won't have one. Chances are, your story isn't focused. But then again there is the other possibility... At times we fluke things.

Perhaps without consciously knowing, a theme is running through your story.

Check your story to see if this is the case. If it is, are you sticking to the theme?

If you find that some parts of your story are straying from the theme, those parts will need to be changed to accommodate the theme.

Now the other possibility...

You don't have a theme and none is running through your story. That's okay. We can still save it. Read through your story and see what it's about. Then come up with the most appropriate theme to it - A theme that makes sense yet won't mean too much work to change the story.

Rewrite those parts that don't accommodate the theme.

It is easier if we come up with a theme while we are at the plotting stage. It saves all that rewriting but not to worry... You won't make the same error again in your next story!

### **About The Author**

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories.

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## **10. Does Your Theme Contain Character, Conflict, Resolution?**

**by: Nick Vernon**

Creative Writing Tips –

For a theme to work and the story, which will revolve around the theme, it has to contain three things...

1. Character
2. Conflict
3. Resolution

What's the reason for this?

If your theme doesn't contain these three essential elements, then you won't be writing a proper short story. It might turn out to be an essay instead.

Because without...

### 1) Characters

You can't achieve emotional depth. Readers become engrossed in stories because of the characters in them. They either become the character (sympathize), or read about an interesting person (empathize).

Emotional depth is achieved when readers use their imagination and senses and/or experiences to live the story through the characters.

### 2) Conflict

Your story will be boring. Why? Without conflict, something to stir things up, nothing happens. And a story, in which nothing happens, is one not worth writing about.

Your characters don't lead carefree lives. Well, not in the instance you are writing about them. In that part of their lives they are faced with a problem. They want something and can't get it because of the conflict, which is preventing them to do so.

And it's that conflict and the struggle the characters has to undergo that keeps us readers interested and in suspense. Will the character succeed or won't he? And when is this all going to happen? And how is it all going to happen?

### 3) Resolution

Something that starts has to finish, one way or another.

Once you have created great characters, which the reader will come to care about, and you have placed them in conflict, that conflict at the end of your story has to be resolved. The characters will achieve their goals or they won't.

That doesn't matter.

You can end your story as you please and as it suits your story – but you have to end it. Ending the story means resolving the conflict.

Does your theme contain character, conflict, resolution?

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## **11. Do You Know What A Plot Is?**

**by: Nick Vernon**

Creative Writing Tips –

What a plot is and what a story is can be sometimes confusing. If you think they are the same... They are not. A plot is the outline of your story. The story is everything included.

I will illustrate the difference by asking you to visualize two pictures...

1. Visualize a skeleton.

Then

2. Visualize a body.

The skeleton is your plot. It's the outline of your story. It won't be visible when we flesh it out but it will still be there, holding your story together.

The body is your story. It's everything, which our story will contain, including the plot. The story is the plot fleshed out.

What does it mean to 'flesh it out?'

Let me show you.

I'll take a brief plot...

A man meets a woman and they fall in love. They encounter great difficulties because their family are against the relationship.

This is the outline of the story.

Now we are going to flesh it out and make it into a story. Fleshing it out means adding things to make this basic plot into a story. To do this we will add the rest of the ingredients such as...

- Setting – Where will our story take place
- Dialogue – What will be said and by whom
- Characters – How many characters will our story contain? Who are they? What is their role?
- Problems – What and how many problems will the couple encounter
- Goal – What is the couple's goal?
- Conflict – What is the conflict?
- Climax – How is the conflict going to come to its peak?
- Ending – Will their love win in the end?
- And anything else I'll need in my story

Once we have written up all these ingredients, this will be our plot fleshed out into a story.

## **About The Author**

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories.

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## **12. Do You Plot With Your Character In Mind?**

**by: Nick Vernon**

Creative Writing Tips –

You are plotting the story. You write down what will happen, what problems will arise, what obstacles you will place so the character won't reach his goals immediately, what he's going to do to overcome these problems etc...

So all these things will be happening to your character since it's his story we are telling.

Does it make sense then to have your character in mind as you plot these things?

It does. Because it will depend, based on the type of person he is, how he will face these problems, what he will feel, what he will think, what he will do.

Different types of personalities make up our world. Some people worry too much, so whatever problems come along, they will worry with the same intensity. Other people view the lighter side of life. Minor problems do not affect them as largely as major problems. To some challengers are welcome - they thrive on them. To others, challengers are viewed with fear and uncertainty.

As you're plotting the events of your story they have to correspond with the type of personality your character possesses.

What happens when you plot without thinking of your character?

He will act 'out of character.' He will do, say, think, feel things that don't suit his personality.

For instance...

If your character is a worrier and you place him in a situation where he doesn't worry, then that's making him act according to how you want him to act in your plot.

You're manipulating him to suit your plot - You're not writing with his personality in mind.

As you plot the events in the story, simultaneously build your character.

Cross-reference what you have written about your character and the situation he is in. Do they correspond?

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