

Writing skills

Telling a story



What is a story?



- According to the dictionaries, a story is ***“an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment”***.

For this reason, precisely, you have plenty more freedom to write, as you can make up most of the story. But a story must follow a **particular structure** which makes sense to the reader. So let's move on to the different **parts of a story**.

Parts of a Story



- A story can roughly be **divided into the following parts**:
- **Title:** The title should either summarise the whole story (without spoilers!) or have something to do with the main theme.
- **Exposition:** This is the beginning of the story, where the characters and setting are established. It serves as the introduction to the next part, the action, and the so-called conflict of our story.
- **Action:** In this part, the characters deal with conflict and do things to solve it.
- **Resolution:** This is where the conflict is resolved and the story concludes with an ending, normally without any loose ends.

Parts of a Story - example



- Your English teacher has asked you to write a story.
- Your story must begin with this sentence:

I felt nervous when the phone rang.

- Write your **story** on your answer sheet.

Parts of a Story - example



Title	THE CALL
Exposition	<i>I felt nervous when the phone rang. It was midnight and I was trying to sleep. Who could it be?</i>
Action	<i>I got up and ran to the phone. However, as I was running, the phone stopped ringing. I was angry, but I decided to go to bed again. But when I was falling asleep, the phone started ringing again. "Oh, my God! This is so annoying!", I thought. This time I picked up the phone quickly and shouted, "Hello?!". Nobody said anything at first, but all of a sudden I heard, "Happy birthday, brother!".</i>
Resolution	<i>I had completely forgotten that it was my birthday. My sister was always the first person to congratulate me.</i>

How to begin a story



- When you **start a story**, if the first sentence isn't given to you, you can use phrases like these:
- *It all began...*
- *When I first...*
- *At the beginning...*
- *It was a hot/cold summer/winter day.*

Time phrases



- One of the great differences between writing a letter, essay, article and so on, and writing a story is the **need to pay careful attention to the time over which the story develops**. In order to **define the order of the events in the story**, we must use time expressions or time phrases. So let's see a few:
 - *Then*
 - *After that*
 - *Not long afterwards*
 - *As soon as*
 - *While*
 - *Meanwhile*
 - *As*
 - *Some time later*
 - *A little later*
 - *_____minutes later*
 - *a moment later*
 - *Later (that morning/afternoon/day/night...)*
 - *Just then*

It is essential to use these expressions **properly**. Otherwise, it won't be clear exactly how the story develops.

Finishing your story



This paragraph, the *resolution*, should be separated from the rest, and it's a good idea to start it with one of the following expressions:

- *In the end*
- *Finally*
- *When it was all over*
- *Eventually*
- *After everything that happened*
- *Luckily*

Verb tenses



One of the reasons why stories are particularly challenging for B1 students is that **they tend to take place in the past**, which makes it necessary to **use a range of past tenses appropriately**. The **main three past tenses** you should really try to use are the following:

- Past simple (-ed/irregular form)
- Past continuous
- Past perfect

Verb tenses



- Past simple and continuous:

*It **was** midnight and I **was trying** to sleep.*

- Past perfect and simple:

I **had** completely **forgotten** it **was** my birthday.

- Past simple:

This time I **picked up** the phone quickly and **shouted**, «Hello?!».

Verb tenses



Please **avoid a simple succession of past simple tenses alone**, like:

I **woke up** and **got out** of bed. Then I **went** to the kitchen and **made** some coffee.

It's not wrong, but it's just **not good enough for a story**.

Tips for Writing a Story



1. Learn, memorise and use some of these expressions.
2. Write a well-structured story.
3. Brainstorm before you write.
4. Revise, edit and improve.
5. Experiment at home, be conservative in the exam.

Homework



1. Write a story
2. Your story must begin with these sentences: ***Sarah sat down under a tree.***
Sarah was completely lost.
3. Write about 100 words

The background features a large, stylized brown arch on the left side. At the bottom left, there is a small icon of an open book with white pages and a red bookmark. The overall color scheme is warm, with shades of yellow and brown.

Thank you for your attention!