



Lesson 4: The Middle - making something happen



4 How to make something happen

Think of all the stories you've ever read, short stories, small books, huge great long books with hundreds of pages. They start. Then something happens. Often lots of things. And then they finish.

It doesn't matter what sort of story you write, it's good to have a bit of conflict – a bit of a struggle, something going wrong, something surprising – and your main character has to try to sort it all out.

A princess might be locked up in a castle and she has to escape. A boy has lost his dog and has to find him. A dinosaur is suddenly spotted walking down the High Street, nibbling the treetops. It's up to you to let the story evolve. Sometimes it's good to work it all out beforehand so you don't get stuck halfway through.

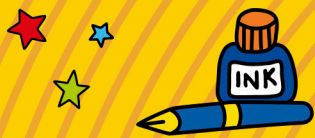
Though sometimes it works just to write at white-hot speed and see what happens without planning anything at all. There's no one way of writing. Everyone's different. If you've got started on your story but are stuck in the middle, try talking inside your head to your main character. Ask them what would really worry them? Then write it, and see how they cope.

DISCUSSION WARM-UP: FAIRY TALE PROBLEMS!

Start by asking pupils to consider some stories that they have (definitely!) heard about: fairy tales! These stories often begin from the point of view of the main character, who faces some kind of a problem. This problem becomes the main theme of the story. Look at some of the examples of common problems below. Can pupils match the fairy tale characters below to their problems?

★ Aladdin ★ Beauty and the Beast ★ Cinderella

Ask pupils: is it possible for one character to have lots of different problems? Can they come up with a problem of their own?



CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1: SOLVING PROBLEMS

In her **Top Tip for making something happen in a story**, Jacqueline says that it doesn't matter what sort of story you write, it's good to have a bit of conflict – a bit of a struggle, something going wrong, something surprising – and your main character has to try to sort it all out.

- ★ Using your ideas from the Warm-up Task, create a list of problems or struggles that you have experienced recently in your own life. They might be big or small – it's completely up to you! These can become your character's problems.
- ★ Now, pick one of the problems that you have come up with. Consider how your character would describe this problem to a friend if they were having a conversation over WhatsApp or text message.
- ★ Then, write back in role as the friend, replying to your character. What advice would he/she give?
- ★ In pairs, role-play your character talking to the friend character about his/her problem. When you've finished, make a list of the best advice that was given. In what ways might your character's problem be resolved in a story?

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2: STORYBOARDING

Storyboarding is a great way to organise a story because it can help you organise your ideas and experiment with different events and plot twists before writing them down!

- ★ Make an original storyboard with a partner! Fold a blank paper in half, and then fold it in half again to create four boxes. In the first box begin your own storyboard by drawing a character at the beginning of an adventure. Remember that your character must have a problem to solve! (You can only use illustration, no words, to tell your story!).
- ★ Next, swap pieces of paper with your partner. Continue their story by drawing the second scene in the next box. They will do the same to your story. You might even be able to add another problem!
- ★ Swap pieces of paper until all your boxes are filled. Make sure to use the information your partner contributed to create a story with consistent characters, a beginning, middle and an end! Consider how the original problem is resolved.
- ★ Use your storyboards (and everything that you've learned) to write your story! You're nearly there...

★ Use the storyboard templates at the back of the pack to help you ★