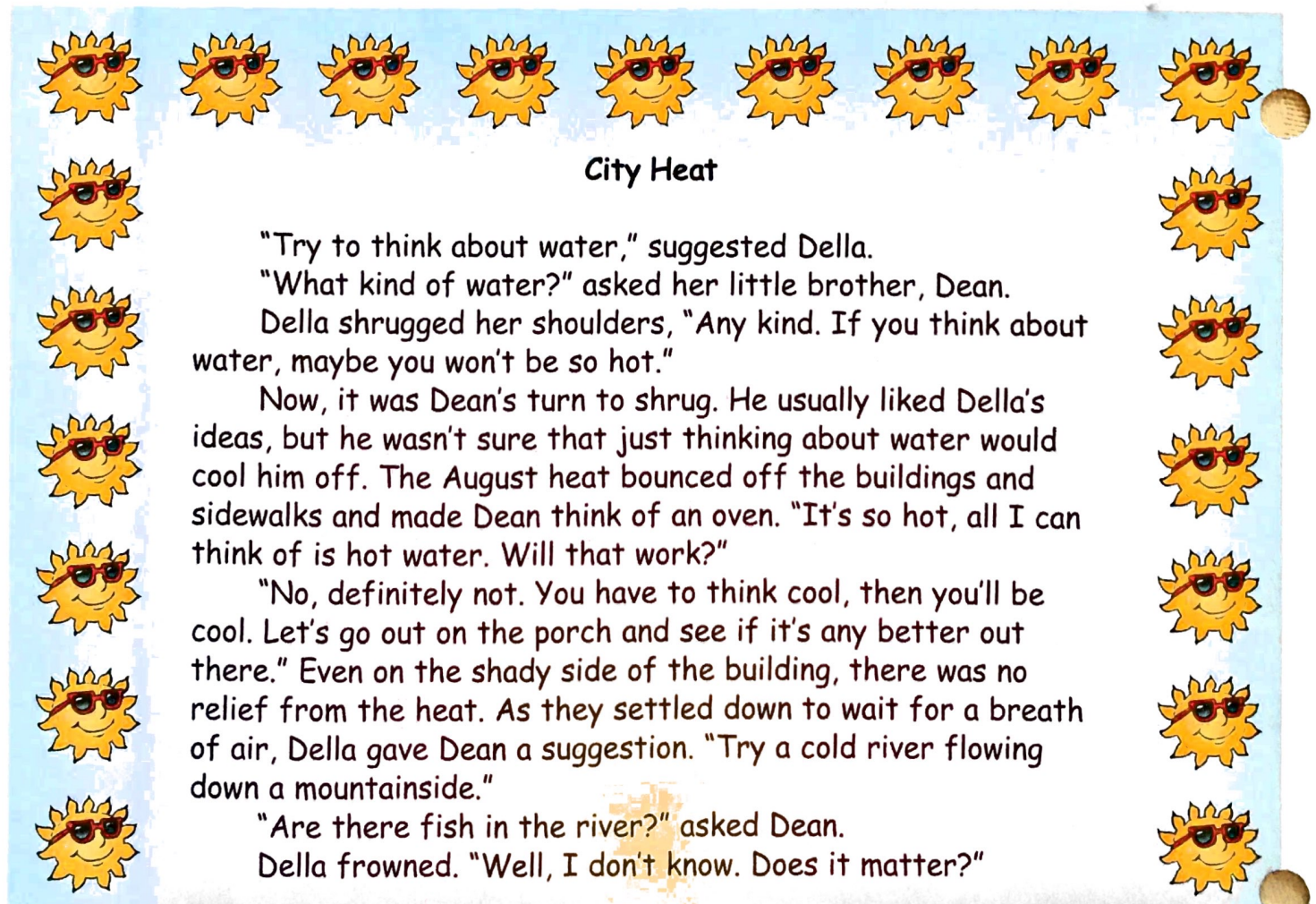


Lesson 1 Parts of a Story

A good story has these ingredients:

- A story tells about made-up people or animals. They are the **characters** in the story.
- A story has a **setting** where the action takes place.
- A story's action is the **plot**. The plot is usually a series of events that includes a problem, or conflict, that needs to be solved.
- A story uses **dialogue**, or conversation among the characters, to move the action of the story along.
- An interesting **beginning, middle, and end** make a story fun to read.
- **Describing words** tell about the characters, setting, and events.

Read this story. Then, answer the questions on page 52.



City Heat

"Try to think about water," suggested Della.

"What kind of water?" asked her little brother, Dean.

Della shrugged her shoulders, "Any kind. If you think about water, maybe you won't be so hot."

Now, it was Dean's turn to shrug. He usually liked Della's ideas, but he wasn't sure that just thinking about water would cool him off. The August heat bounced off the buildings and sidewalks and made Dean think of an oven. "It's so hot, all I can think of is hot water. Will that work?"

"No, definitely not. You have to think cool, then you'll be cool. Let's go out on the porch and see if it's any better out there." Even on the shady side of the building, there was no relief from the heat. As they settled down to wait for a breath of air, Della gave Dean a suggestion. "Try a cold river flowing down a mountainside."

"Are there fish in the river?" asked Dean.

Della frowned. "Well, I don't know. Does it matter?"

Lesson 1 Parts of a Story

"Well, if I'm going to picture a river, I need to know whether there are fish in it," answered Dean.



"Okay, there are fish in it," said Della.

"What kind?"



"Okay," said Della, impatiently, "this isn't working. Let's go for a walk. Maybe it's cooler down on the ground."



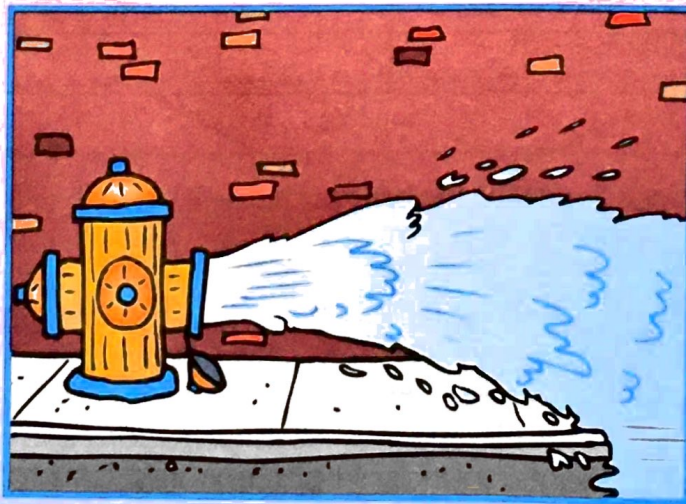
There was even less air down on the sidewalk than there had been on their porch. Talking was too much work, so they just walked. Suddenly, Della said, "Stop right here and close your eyes. Let's try again." Dean obeyed. He was willing to try anything.



"Okay, picture this," Della said. "You are standing at the base of a waterfall. There are no fish because the waterfall is too big and too strong. You can feel the spray on your face..."



"I can feel the spray on my face!" interrupted Dean. He really could feel the spray. New respect for his sister's ideas rose up in him. Then, Della poked his arm. He opened his eyes, and Della was standing there grinning. Beyond her was a fire truck, and past the fire truck was a spouting fire hydrant. Kids and adults were streaming out of the hot brick buildings. A moment later, Della and Dean were right there with them.



Lesson 1 | Parts of a Story

Answer these questions about "City Heat." Look back at the story if you need to.

Who are the characters in the story?

Where does the action take place?

Setting: _____

What words in the story told you where the setting is?

What problem occurs?

How does Della solve the problem?

Review the dialogue in the story. Find an example of a line of dialogue that tells you what is happening or what is about to happen.

How does Dean feel about Della? How do you know?

The writer uses words that appeal to readers' senses. Record some of those sense words here. Remember to look for sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes.

Lesson 2 Dialogue

Dialogue is the conversation among characters in a story. Good dialogue helps readers get to know the characters. It also moves the action of the story along. Here is what dialogue looks like.



“Mmm-hmmm?” droned the teller. I took this as my invitation to step up to the window.

“I’d like to make a deposit, please,” I said. I had practiced saying it all the way to the bank.

“Mmm-hmmm,” she said again.

I slid my envelope across the smooth counter. I felt the need to explain, so I added, “It’s everything I saved.”

“Mmm-hmmm.”

“It’s my recycling money,” I went on. “I’ve been picking up aluminum cans all summer.”

“Mmm-hmmm,” she said. I wondered how she could count money and listen to me all at the same time.

What do you learn about the teller from this dialogue?

What do you learn about the narrator (the other speaker)?

Take a closer look at a line of dialogue and its punctuation.

The **tag line** tells who is speaking.

Quotation marks go before and after the speaker’s exact words.

I felt the need to explain, so I added, “It’s everything I saved.”

A **comma** separates the speaker’s words from the tag line.

The first word that a speaker says begins with a capital letter, even if that word is not the first word of the entire sentence.

Lesson 2 Dialogue

Below is some dialogue that has not been punctuated. Add the punctuation. Look at the story on page 53 for examples if you need to.

Here is your deposit slip said the teller.

I took it and said Thank you, ma'am.

Do you need anything else she asked.

Dialogue should sound like real people talking. A ten-year-old character should sound like a kid. An adult should sound like a grown-up. Remember that adults sound different from each other. The president of a bank would sound much different from the bored bank teller, like the one in the dialogue on page 53.

Write a conversation between yourself and a bank president. Make the dialogue sound realistic. Stop and think how you would speak to a business person sitting behind a large desk. Remember to use quotation marks and tag lines. Look at the examples on page 53 if you need to. The first line of dialogue has been done for you.

“I would like to deposit a large amount of money in your bank, please.”

Lesson 3 Setting

You're watching a scary movie. That low, rumbling music is rising again, and you just know something bad is going to happen. Movie directors use music to help set the tone, or mood, of a movie. When you write, you have to rely on the setting to help set the tone. The setting of a story is when and where the story's action takes place.

In some stories, readers learn some details of the setting almost by accident. Perhaps the narrator looks out a window and comments on "the bustling city" below. Maybe a character is a passenger in a covered wagon, so readers know that the story is set in the mid- to late 1800s.

In other stories, the narrator describes the setting. Here is an example from F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story, "Winter Dreams."

In the fall when the days became crisp and gray, and the long Minnesota winter shut down like the white lid of a box, Dexter's skis moved over the snow that hid the fairways of the golf course.

Look at all the information in that one sentence:

It is early winter.

Someone is in Minnesota.

A character's name is Dexter.

He skis, and he is skiing across a golf course.

Besides information, there is also a mood. It is a quiet, reflective mood.

What can you do in one sentence? Use Fitzgerald's sentence above as a model. Write about something that happens during a certain season. Name the season at the beginning of the sentence like Fitzgerald did. Remember to use commas and transition words to keep your sentence complete and clear.

Lesson 3 Setting

Here is another example of a setting described by a narrator. This passage is from "The Hound of the Baskervilles" by Arthur Conan Doyle.

Now and then we passed a moorland cottage, walled and roofed with stone, with no creeper to break its harsh outline. Suddenly we looked down into a cuplike depression, patched with stunted oaks and firs which had been twisted and bent by the fury of years of storm. Two high, narrow towers rose over the trees. The driver pointed with his whip.

"Baskerville Hall," said he.

What information do you get about the setting from this passage?

What mood, or feeling, do you get from the passage?

Writers use details in their settings that match the mood of what is happening in the story. First, think about details that a writer might include in a very happy part of a story.

What might the weather be like?

What time of day might it be?

In what kinds of places might the characters be?

Lesson 3 Setting

Now, think about setting details that a writer might include in a scary part of a story.

What might the weather be like?

What time of day might it be?

In what kinds of places might the characters be?

Look back over the details you recorded for happy settings and scary settings. Are you starting to imagine a great story? Choose one of the settings you have already begun to visualize and develop it further here.

Write a paragraph that describes the setting. Indicate both when and where the action takes place. Remember to organize your details in a way that makes sense.

Lesson 4 Characters

Think of a character from a book you have read. Do you remember feeling good when the character felt good and bad when the character felt bad? Name some of your favorite characters.

Now, think about what you know about those characters. How did you learn about them? How did the narrator or author help you get to know the character? Normally, readers learn about characters in four ways. You learn from:

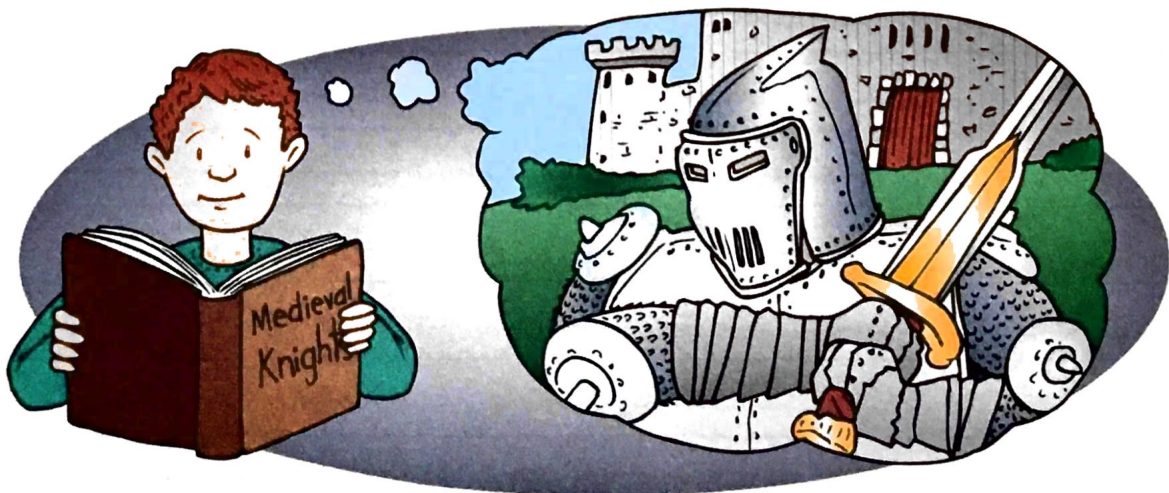
- what the narrator tells you.
- what the character says and how he or she says it.
- what the character does.
- what other characters say about the character.

Look at your list of characters above. Choose one that you really liked or remember well. Write what you know about that character. For each detail you record, write how you know it. For example, you might know that a character is bold because she stood up in front of the class on her first day in a new school and told her whole life story. You might know that a character is adopted because another character reveals that information in dialogue.

Character: _____

What I Know About the Character

How I Know It



 **Lesson 4** Characters

Now, think about a character you would like to create. Rather than thinking about what happens to the character, think about what kind of person the character is. Answer these questions.

Is the character human? _____ If not, what is the character? _____

Is the character male or female? _____

What two words best describe your character?

What background details or family history might be important to readers?

What might your character say, and how? Write a line of dialogue that your character might speak.

What might other characters say about this character? Either show some dialogue or describe what others would say.



Now, introduce your character. Write a paragraph about him or her.

Lesson 5 Point of View

When a writer writes a story, he or she chooses a narrator to tell the story. In some stories, the narrator is one of the characters in the story. Words such as *I*, *me*, and *my* let readers know that this is happening. This is called **first-person point of view**. Here is a piece of a story written in first person.

"Hey, kid. Give me your lunch." That was all that Larry Garvin ever said to me. I had come to think of him simply as L.G., short for Lunch Grabber.

"Why do you let him do that?" my friend Rico asked after watching yet another lunch grab.

I gave him one of those "duh" looks. "He's twice my size, Rico! Besides, when he doesn't take my lunch, he doesn't have anything to eat. Mom has started packing two lunches." Rico's eyes popped as I pulled a second lunch out of my backpack.

Here is the same scene, but it is written in **third-person point of view**. The narrator "reports" all the action, but does not take part in it. In this case, the narrator is all-knowing. In other words, the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters. Readers see words such as *he*, *she*, *him*, *her*, *his*, *they*, and *them* in stories that are written in third person.

"Hey, kid. Give me your lunch." That was all that Larry Garvin ever said to James. James had come to think of Larry simply as "L.G.," short for Lunch Grabber.

"Why do you let him do that?" James's friend Rico asked after watching yet another lunch grab.


James gave him one of those "duh" looks. "He's twice my size, Rico! Besides, when he doesn't take my lunch, he doesn't have anything to eat. Mom has started packing two lunches." Rico's eyes popped as James pulled a second lunch out of his backpack.

NAME _____

Lesson 5 Point of View

Look back at the piece of the story on page 60. What do you think the bully, Larry Garvin, was thinking? Write another version of this scene from the first-person point of view, with Larry as the narrator. Here is the first line. You can take it from there.

"Hey, kid. Give me your lunch," I said.

 Now, practice writing in third-person point of view. The next day, instead of allowing Larry to take his lunch, James simply offers it to him. How does Larry respond? Write this scene in third person with an all-knowing narrator. You may choose to reveal the inner thoughts and feelings of James, Larry, Rico, or all three.

Lesson 6 Stories Are Everywhere

Many stories that you read are **realistic**. They include human characters who are more or less normal people. They live on Earth, whether in the past or present. Though their characters come from a writer's imagination, they could be real, and the events could actually happen.



List some stories or books you have read that are realistic.

What kind of realistic story would you like to write? Will it be about an adventure that a kid had on the frontier in 1870 or a modern-day kid who is trying to break the all-time swimming record at his school? Jot down some realistic story ideas here.

Realistic story idea #1

Character(s): _____

Setting: (time) _____

(place) _____

Plot: _____

Realistic idea #2

Character(s): _____

Setting: (time) _____

(place) _____

Plot: _____

Lesson 6 Stories Are Everywhere

Do you remember Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill? They are characters from **tall tales**. It is easy to remember them because their stories include such outrageous details. The writers of these tales use exaggeration; they stretch details to make them funny or perhaps just strange. Tall tale characters could not be real, and the events could not actually happen.



Think of tall tales you have read. Try to recall some of the exaggerated details. For example, how big was the character? How did he or she travel? Those are the kinds of details that are fun to exaggerate.

What kind of tall tale would you like to write? Who will be your main characters? Where will they live and what will they do? Let your imagination go and write down a couple of tall tale ideas here.

Tall tale idea #1

Character(s): _____

Setting: (time) _____

(place) _____

Plot: _____

Details to exaggerate: _____

Tall tale idea #2

Character(s): _____

Setting: (time) _____

(place) _____

Plot: _____

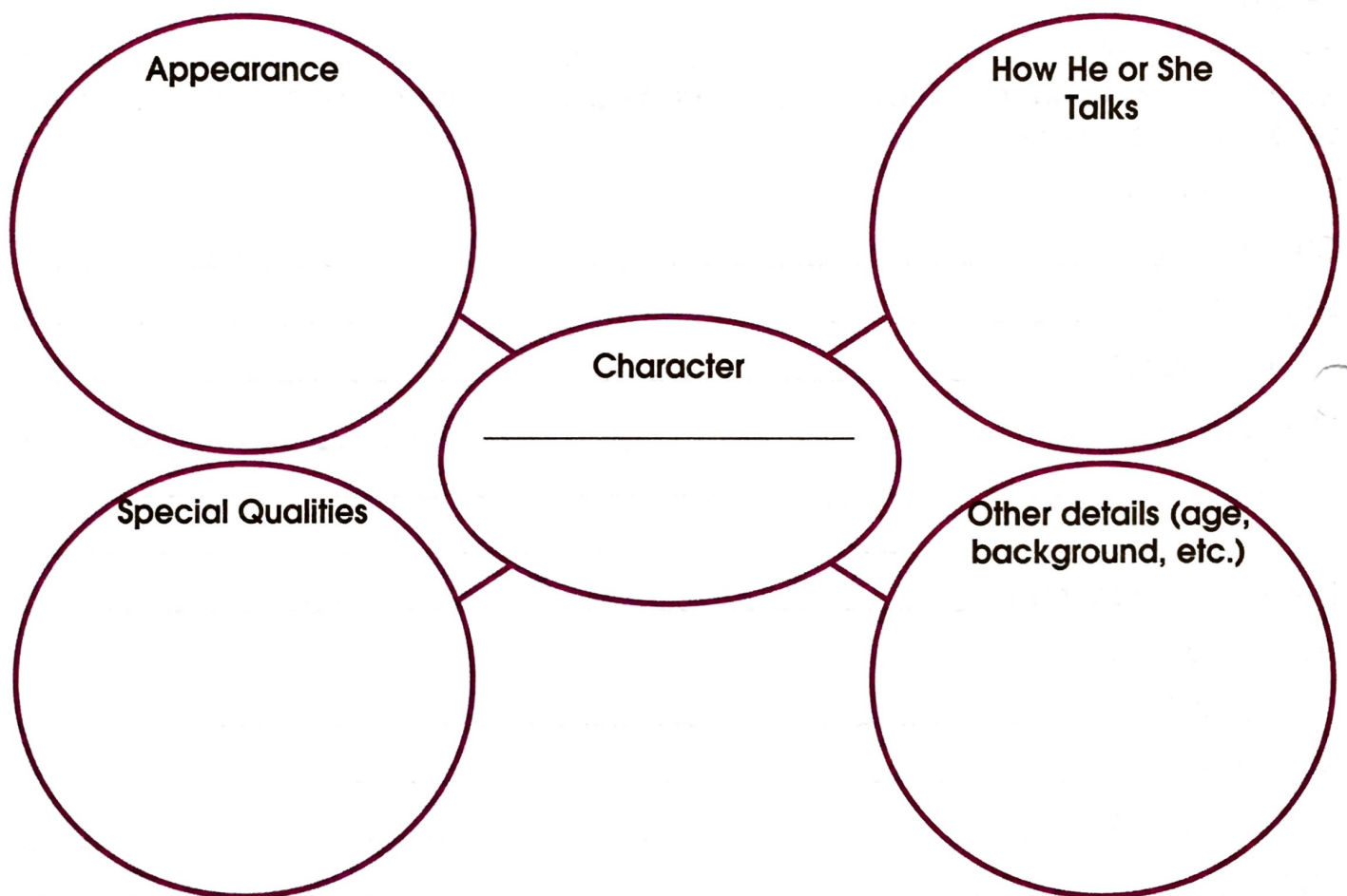
Details to exaggerate: _____

Lesson 7 The Writing Process: Story

Some story writers like to use settings and situations they have experienced themselves. Others like to go beyond themselves and use exaggeration to create funny, often wild, worlds. Use the writing process and see what kind of world you can create.

Prewrite

Look again at the story ideas you wrote on pages 62 and 63. Choose one of those ideas, or another idea that you like, and begin to develop it. Whether you are writing a realistic story or a tall tale, you will need to pay special attention to your main character. Use this idea web to record details about how he or she looks, acts, speaks, and so on.



Before you continue, consider these questions about your setting and plot.

- What is the setting of your story? Consider place or location, season, time of day, weather conditions, and so on.
- What is the character's problem?
- What does the character do to try to solve the problem? Does it take more than one try? What is the final solution or outcome?

 **Lesson 7** The Writing Process: Story

Now, it is time to put the parts of your story together. Think about the story you are about to tell. Use the story map on this page to list the important parts of your story.

Character(s)

Setting

Plot: Beginning

Plot: Middle

Plot: End

Lesson 7 The Writing Process: Story

Draft

Write a first draft of your story. Refer to your story map as you write your story on this page. Continue on another sheet of paper if you need to. As you write, do not worry about making mistakes. Just get your ideas down in sentences and in order.

Now that you have written your draft, write an idea for a title here. It might change later, but that's okay.

Title: _____

Lesson 7 The Writing Process: Story

Revise

Every writer must look at his or her work with fresh eyes and figure out how to make the writing better. Even experienced writers do this, and no one considers it an easy job.

Answer the questions below. If you answer “no” to any of these questions, those are the areas you might need to improve. Write notes on your draft so you know what needs attention.

- Did you give details about an interesting character and a setting?
- Did you include a problem and a solution in your plot?
- Did you tell events in an order that made sense?
- Did you create pictures in your readers’ minds with vivid adjectives and adverbs?
- If you wrote a tall tale, did you stretch details to make them funny?
- Did you use dialogue to help readers learn about characters and to move the story forward?
- Did you describe how things look, sound, smell, feel, and taste?

Now, review the important parts of a story.

- In the beginning of a story, readers meet the characters and learn a little about the setting and the plot. The first sentence of a story should make readers want to keep on reading.
- In the middle of a story, the action takes place. Readers see the character or characters face a problem. The characters probably make one or more attempts to solve the problem.
- In the end, the characters solve the problem in a logical way. Remember, it is not satisfying to read a story in which a big problem just goes away by magic.

On your draft, draw brackets around the beginning, middle, and end of your story. Write some notes if you decide that you must change any of those parts to make them more interesting for your readers.

Lesson 7 The Writing Process: Story

Write the revision of your first draft here. As you revise, remember to look for vivid details that appeal strongly to your readers' senses.

Now that you have revised your draft, are you still happy with your title? If not, now is your chance to change it.

Title: _____



Lesson 7 The Writing Process: Story

Proofread

Now, correct those last little mistakes. Proofreading is easier if you look for just one kind of error at a time. So, read through once for capital letters. Read again for end punctuation. Read a third time for spelling errors. Here is a checklist to help you proofread your revised story.

- ___ Each sentence begins with a capital letter.
- ___ Each sentence ends with the correct punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point).
- ___ Dialogue is punctuated correctly.
- ___ Each sentence states a complete thought.
- ___ All words are spelled correctly.

When proofreaders work, they use certain symbols. Using these symbols makes their job easier. These symbols will make your job easier, too.

-  three little lines under a letter mean that the letter should be capitalized.
- Write in missing end marks like this:  ? !
- "Please add a comma and quotation marks," she said.
- Fix incorrect or misspelled words like ~~these~~ ^{this}.

Use these symbols as you proofread your story. Remember to read your writing out loud, even if there is no one to listen. When you read out loud, you may hear mistakes or rough spots that you did not see.

Publish

If you wish, write a final copy of your story on a separate sheet of paper. Write carefully and neatly so that there are no mistakes. Then, add illustrations and make a neat cover or title page. Share your story with friends and family.