

The Shipwrecked Sailors of Start Point



Top tips and instructions to tell your ending to our story! - page 1

Instructions

Mrs Perry, the coastguards wife, has told you her story about the sinking of the steamship The Marana during The Great Blizzard of 1891. She stopped the story on a 'cliff hanger' and didn't say what happened to the crew.

She would like the children to make up an imaginary ending to the story and do a piece of creative writing about what they think happened next. Mrs Perry is encouraging the children to dive deep into their imaginations to find a story and tell it in a believable way. It doesn't need to be close to the historical facts.

Several schools are taking part in this exciting local history project. We're expecting lots of brilliant stories to be sent in. The taking part is highly valued by our panel and we'll find ways to share as many stories and pictures as we can.

It is a story writing competition and only one story will be chosen by our panel of judges. The new story ending will be added to the end of Mrs Perry's story. She will then tell the whole story to include the winning entry which will be filmed and shared. We hope you have fun with it and we really look forward to reading your stories!

Questions

What happened to the 22 men in the starboard lifeboat heading for Prawle Point?

What happened to the captain and his men in the smaller boat on the leeward side?

These could be one person, several people or all of them.

How did Anders Johnsen find his way from the lifeboat to the cottage? What happened to him afterwards?

Do you believe in mermaids?

There is no word limit. Our guideline would be between 200 - 1,000 words.

Here are Mrs Perry's Top Tips for writing stories.

1. Ideas

Some ideas pop into our heads quickly and others take their time. Like a seed, ideas can grow if they are given: information, time, exploration and confidence.

Avoid giving yourself pressure to have a brilliant idea straight away.

Listen to your ideas, sometimes talking to another person can help you get to know your idea better. Is it working? Isn't it working? What do you like? What can you drop?

Make notes, doodle. Catch the idea.

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2. Choices

Creativity is all about making decisions. Choose the main character(s) in your story.

What happens to them?

What do they want?

Who or what helps them?

Who or what gets in their way?

What do they want most in the world?

Is there a special object or animal in this story?

Where does the story take place?

What happens in the end, where will you stop the story?

Where is the dramatic tension in your story?

Who will tell the story? A narrator or a character?

What is the time span? Does it happen over 1 night or day, a few years or an hour.

What are the building blocks of your story. The details can come later.

3. Make a start

Plan your story in your usual way e.g. mountains, maps, squares. It's a good place to begin and your plan can change once you've made a start.

Think about and imagine your story, what does it look, sound and smell like?

What does your character look like and how do they feel?

More on this later, for now start to see your story in your mind's eye as you plan it out.

4. Creative writing

The Pen is mightier than the sword.

A good story will excite its reader and good grammar will help to tell the tale. At this stage focus on getting your story ideas down on paper. Avoid trying to make it perfect or worry too much about your sentences for now. You can polish it up once you've put your writing on the page.

Make a list of:

Words you like, phrases you like.

Language that fits your story e.g. Victorian language, shipping language, sea related words. The sea gives us plenty of wonderful words.

Interesting facts that link with your story.

5. Creating a story world and making it believable

You've been asked to make a story inspired by a real life event and to use the full force of your imagination. This is a challenge.

The winning story will be imaginative and believable. Making a story believable doesn't mean making it like everyday life or sticking to the facts. A story is believable if it creates a world and sticks to the rules of that world. The logic of the story needs to keep making sense. If a dinosaur had arrived in the middle of Mrs Perry's story then we wouldn't believe any of it.

The Hobbit, Spiderman, Harry Potter are all believable even though they are fantasy. Avoid squashing your story by saying: and then they woke up, and then they died, and then aliens came and took them to outer space.

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6. Landscape

Where the story takes place is an important part of your story.

Tell us about it.

Be specific, name places, plants, trees, coves. The old maps have lots of local names on them. (The same goes for birds and animals)

Weave it into your story e.g. The captain climbed onto the granite rock, his bare feet slipped on the seaweed.

Use your local knowledge.

7. Character

Give us clues as to what they look like, you don't need to tell us everything as our mind's eye will fill in the gaps.

Items of clothing and objects tell us about people.

What's the main emotion of your character?

How do they speak? Give them some words to say i.e. reported speech.

Weave it into your story e.g. Anders wet clothes hung heavily from his tired body.

8. Description

Less is more.

It can be tempting to use lots of adjectives. Using lots of description doesn't mean the reader will see it more clearly. Too many words can sometimes hide the picture we want to paint. Which one adjective is the best to use? Use a simile or metaphor to be descriptive.

9. The 5 senses

Bringing the 5 senses into your writing will add magic to your story. Touch, smells, sounds, tastes can bring a story to life. We tend to write about seeing things so try and vary it.

10. Writing history

Mrs Perry's story is full of information about life in rural Victorian Britain in 1891. We hear about steamships, trains, postal and communication services, children bringing in wood, the role of men and women, lifebelts and life saving apparatus. We hear how Britain was connected with the rest of the world as The Marana was taking railways sleepers to Colombo in Ceylon. Ceylon is now called Sri Lanka where they were building railways.

You can add historically accurate pieces of information into your made up story. These are interesting and will help to set it in a time period.

Human beings - History, art, culture and writing can help us to look back in time. It seems that people care about the same things they always cared about. Our physical needs and future dreams stay the same while the world around us changes.

Historical research

Investigate what life was like for people at the time. Keep your story true to its time period.

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Social history

How did people behave in public or at home?
What was life like for children, women and men?
What did they wear or eat, what jobs or hobbies did they have?

National history

Who was on the throne?
What famous people were alive and why were they well known?
What laws were there? What were people concerned about?

International history

How does the local area connect to the rest of world, and why?
What international influences are there locally, there are usually more than first meet the eye.

11. Inspired by folk tales

Research stories of merfolk, mythic creatures, monstrous fish, superstitions of sailors.
These are rich sources for writing stories and can sit quite comfortably alongside facts and the real world. Be poetic. Why is the sea angry? What will help it calm?

12. Enjoy writing your story

If you enjoy telling the story then the chances are high that the reader will enjoy it too!

Mrs Perry aka Sara Hurley.
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