
THE SHORT STORY

Personal Writing

PLANNING YOUR PLOT



- Accept the limitations of the exam. You have around one hour to write three pages.
 - Know how your story will end.
 - A simple story, well told will earn more marks than a complicated, disorganised tale.
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AVOID...

- War stories
 - Terrorist attacks
 - Natural disasters
 - The Big Match
 - Crime
 - Ghost stories
 - Rewrites of fantasy novels you have read or films you have seen
 - Any form of zombie
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FOCUS ON...

- Real people
 - Real relationships
 - Remember, you like your friends even though they rarely - if ever - fight battles, battle crime or flee from lava.
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STRUCTURE



- Introduction
 - Complication
 - Resolution
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CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Narrative viewpoint: who is telling the story?
 - Setting: where is the story set? It should be a place you know well or have thoroughly researched.
 - Characters: limit these to one or two, if possible.
 - Tense: are you writing in the past or the present tense? Decide in advance and stick to your chosen tense.
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THEME



- What is the message of your story?
 - Love?
 - Betrayal?
 - Revenge?
 - Strength?
 - Ambition?
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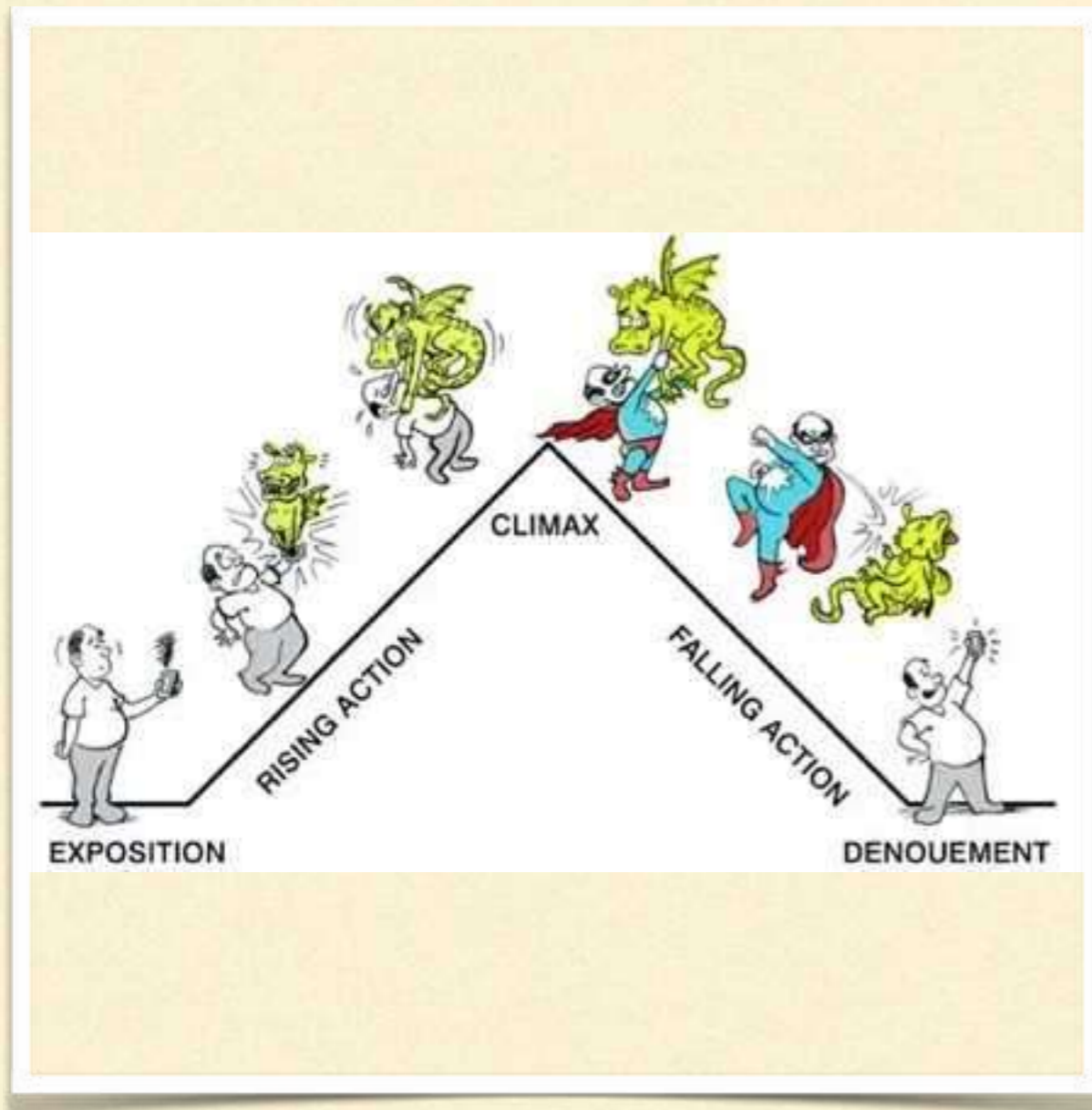
CONFLICT

- This does not have to be physical. In fact, it's better if it's not.
 - The character could be fighting with another person
 - The character could be struggling with an aspect of their own personality
 - The character may be battling an issue like bullying
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SUSPENSE

- Keep the reader guessing
 - Build up the tension until the reader wonders what will happen
 - Dialogue is a good way of adding drama - and realism - to your story
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CLIMAX / TURNING POINT



- Make sure that the reader is very clear as to what happens here. It might be clear in your head, but that's not the point.

ENDING

- The examiner will mark your work after he or she reads the final paragraph, so a weak ending will cost you marks.
 - The reader should be satisfied with the ending and feel that all loose ends have been tied up.
 - There is no need to explain how the events of the story affected the character for the rest of his or her life. The reader can guess if necessary.
 - Surprise endings are great, if you can manage them and they make sense.
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