

Narrative Writing

GCSE English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Plan a story from the title 'The Box' in five minutes.

Step 1 · Character, want, obstacle

Priya (15) wants to tell Dad she has quit football; he has just bought her expensive boots.

Step 2 · Moment

One evening at the kitchen table.

Step 3 · Shape

Hook: the boots in the box. Build: Dad's excitement, her silence. Turn: she says it. Consequence: his unexpected gentleness.

Step 4 · Motif and last line

The box: opened at the start, closed by Dad near the end. Last line: the drive to the library, nothing mentioned.

Answer: A small, emotionally focused plan with a turn and a known ending.

Check: Could you write it in 40 minutes? Yes: one room, two characters, one change.

2. Now try one with the steps

Write a hook that starts close to the problem.

Step 1 · Avoid

Step 2 · Start with the object

Step 3 · Why it works

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. Why is a short time span best for an exam story? [1]

2. Name the four parts of the story shape used in this lesson. [1]

3. What does 'first person present tense' feel like to a reader? [1]
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4. What is a motif in a short story? [1]
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5. Rewrite 'He was furious' to show the emotion rather than tell it. [2]
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6. What is the main character's want and obstacle in 'The Box' plan? [2]
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7. Give one rule for setting out dialogue. [1]
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8. Why might a writer choose third person limited over first person? [2]
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9. Write an opening sentence for a story titled 'The Last Bus' that contains the conflict. [2]
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10. What is an unreliable narrator, and how do you signal one? [2]
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11. Explain why an ordinary response such as 'asked if she wanted toast' can be more powerful than an emotional speech. [2]
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12. Plan a four-part story for the prompt 'Write a story about a secret', one line per part. [3]
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13. How can a circular ending show change? [2]
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14. Why is 'Then I woke up' a weak ending for a GCSE narrative?

[1]

4. Before you hand it in

Too many events: a chase, a kidnap, a rescue and a twist.

One want, one obstacle, one turn. Depth beats action.

Long, slow openings about waking up and breakfast.

Start to the problem

Naming emotions ('she felt sad and angry').

Show through action, body language, setting and what is not said.

No ending, because time ran out.

Plan your last line first and leave ten minutes for the last two paragraphs and proofreading.