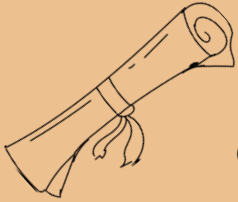




# 7th Grade Short Story Builder



## Notes for Parents/ Guardians/Teachers:

**Puppy Kisses Short Story Builder** is a literacy project that empowers students to write their own stories about school life. Stories are based on one or more of the six Puppy Kisses characters, who all attend school together. Each puppy has a distinct personality, allowing students to identify with them in a fun and imaginative way.

We believe writing should be both fun and educational, which is why our Short Story Builder teaches **Common Core Writing Standards** through lovable characters and inspirational school stories. In addition, fictional writing is a fantastic, therapeutic way to break down complex emotions into short, imaginative stories.

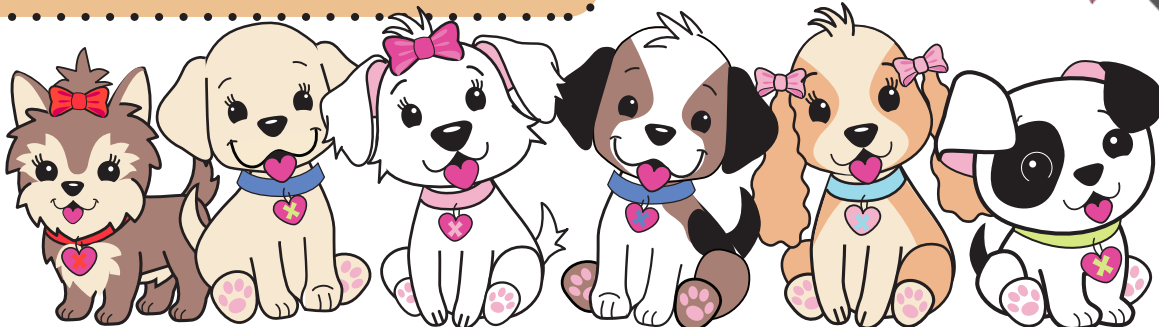
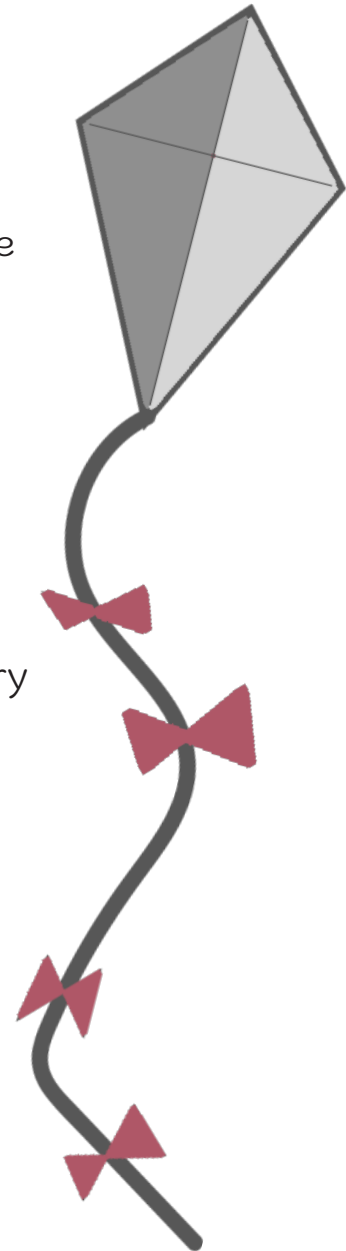
As seventh graders, students start to experience new, complex experiences and emotions. Your students may now be very aware of social constructs and norms. They may desire to “fit in” or experiment with their own preferences.

***This guide can be used as a space to explore who they are on a deeper, more mature level.***

We encourage students to publish their original stories and share them with their friends, classmates, peers, teammates, family members, or anyone they feel safe enough to share with. This helps them gain confidence in their writing as well as feel rewarded for their time and effort.

## Note to Students:

Collaboration is the key to unlocking your world of creativity. Share your work often with someone you trust. By going through each step below, you will create a short story by exploring your imagination and emotions.





Notes for  
Parents/  
Guardians/  
Teachers:

### The Common Core Writing Standards for seventh graders:

- a) Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences
- b) Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically
- c) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters
- d) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from a one-time frame or setting to another
- e) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events
- f) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences and events

This short story-writing guide focuses on *helping the writer express themselves by chunking the writing process into small bite-sized pieces*. However, it is important to remember that every child learns at his or her own pace. If needed, you can repeat a guide more than once.

Ideally, you should work with your student on this story guide. Conversations about their writing are equally as important. Having a safe space to talk about ideas is crucial to building confidence, communication skills, and creativity.

# It's Time to Build!

## Meet the Puppy Pack:

Cora



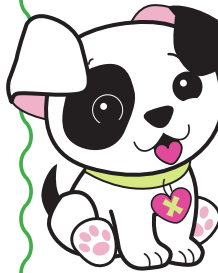
Cora is smart and caring. She loves planning fun things for her friends to do together. Making friends and going to school are her favorite things to do.

Scarlett



Scarlett has a big brain! She loves learning about science and dreams of becoming a doctor. Her favorite place is the library, and she's never too busy to help a friend with their homework.

Jacob



Curious by nature, Jacob has a great nose for investigating. He wants to be a detective when he grows up. For now, he loves photography and takes photos for the school newspaper.

Tess



Tess has a creative eye, and she wants to be a designer. In and out of school she can be found sketching; she loves to share her drawings with her friends.



Zach

Zach is a competitor. He loves playing all kinds of games. When he grows up, he wants to design video games. His friends know they can find him on the playground or in the computer lab. Zach can be a bit of a show-off, but he loves helping his friends.

Emily



Nothing makes shy Emily happier than to settle down with a book. Her love of reading has made her want to be either a writer or a professor — or both! She loves hanging out in the library with Scarlett or in the theater or music room.

## Step 1:

### Choose a main character.

You can choose between Cora, Scarlett, Jacob, Tess, Zach, or Emily.  
You can learn more about the puppy pack here:

[Puppy-Kisses.com/puppypack/](http://Puppy-Kisses.com/puppypack/)



Cora



Scarlett



Jacob



Zach



Tess



Emily

Who will **YOUR** story be about?

EXAMPLE: Tess

Write your main character's name here

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## Let's decide on the point of view (POV)

### Step 2: of your story.

The point of view is the eyes through which your story will be told.

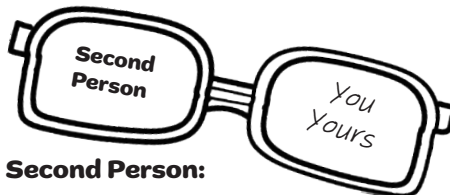
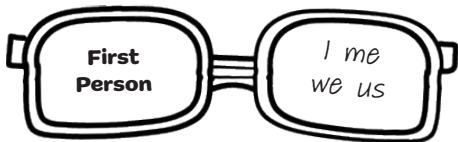
There are three different points of view.

#### First Person:

This tells the story **through the character's eyes**. The pronoun "I"

EXAMPLE: I was walking home from school and saw Cora running towards me.

"Tess! Hurry! I need your help!"



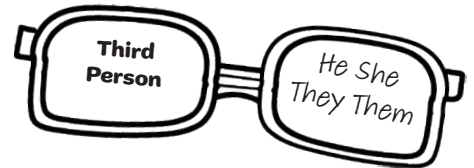
#### Second Person:

This point of view **makes the reader a part of the story**; the word "you" will be used. This is usually used in nonfiction or choose-your-own-adventure books.

EXAMPLE: You and Tess are passing notes to one another and your teacher catches you.

#### Third Person:

The story is being **told from the outside looking in**. The characters are addressed by name, and the pronouns "he/she/they/him/her/them" are used. This is most commonly used in fiction; however, feel free to explore any of the POVs when writing your story.



EXAMPLE: Tess was walking home from school, and she watched the gloomy clouds roll in. She was jolted by the sound of thunder and in an instant was running home as rain poured down from the sky.

Which POV would you like to write your story in? Explain it here

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.....



### Step 3: *Let's begin designing our characters.*

Characters have different traits. They have outside traits or physical traits that **can be seen**. They also have inside traits or **ways the character thinks and acts**. List different adjectives to describe how your character looks and adjectives that describe their personality.

#### EXAMPLE:

##### Physical Adjectives:

ripped, toned, petite, extremely tall, freckled, oily, dewy



*List the Physical Adjectives that describe your character:*

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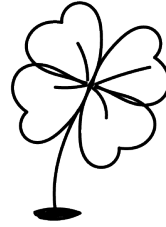
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##### Personality Adjectives:

chatty, clever, easy-going, grumpy, generous, lazy, loud, lucky

*List the Personality Adjectives that describe your character:*

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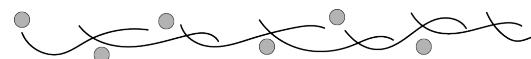
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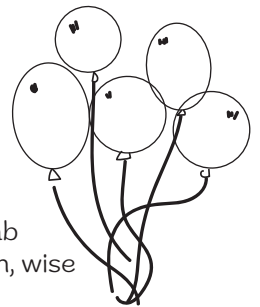
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### Step 4:

Supporting characters are characters that help the main character **move the story along**. The supporting characters could be friends, teachers, villains, or family. List 1-2 supporting characters that will be in your story. Then repeat the activity from number three. What are their outside and inside traits?



*List the Character Traits of one of your supporting characters here.*

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Adjectives:

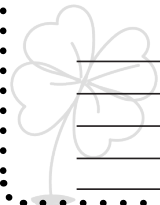
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Personality Adjectives:




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#### EXAMPLE: Cora:

- o Outside: ravishing, glowing, graceful, boorish, drab
- o Inside: nervous, quiet, selfish, serious, smart, vain, wise

*List the Character Traits of one of your supporting characters here.*

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Adjectives:

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Personality Adjectives:

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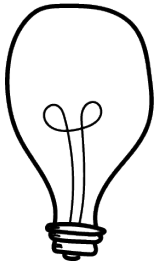


## Step 5:

*Let's sequence our story in order:  
problem – suspense – solution.*

Each story has a **problem that the main character must solve**. Decide on 1-3 different scenarios that your main character could be in. Each section could have anywhere from 1-2 subsections. Check it out below.

### EXAMPLE:



#### **Ideas:**

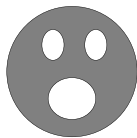
**Bonding Over Hardship:** Cora has just experienced a major loss in her family. However, when Tess was younger so did she. She is able to be there for Cora in a way that not many others understand.

**Embarrassing Moments:** An anonymous person posted a not-so-great photo of Cora online without her consent. Tess encourages her to do the right thing by telling the adults in her life. The photo is taken down, and the adults are even able to track down the person who posted it.

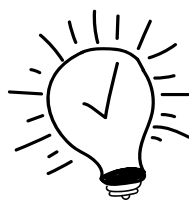
**Collaboration Over Competition:** Tess and Cora are on the track team getting ready to run the 4x100m relay race. Tess and Cora are the last two legs of the race.



**Problem:** Tess and Cora are in a race.



**Suspense:** They are losing the race by a full 100 meters because the first runner on their relay race team fell down.



**Solution:** Cora is the runner on the last leg of the race. She runs her hardest and fastest. Her team still loses, but the opposing team gives her a big high five for putting in such a good effort.



Place your story's main **PROBLEM** here.

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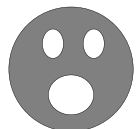
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Explain the **SUSPENSE** that is created in your story here.

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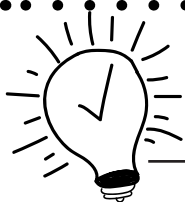
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Describe the **SOLUTION** that your story presents.

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## Step 6:

### Use descriptive and sensory language to create a setting.

Use this section to describe what your setting looks like, feels like, smells like, and sounds like. Use as many descriptive adjectives as possible. Make sure you are showing your reader and not telling.

#### EXAMPLE:

**Tell:** The track was **big, busy, and loud** with people.

#### Show:

It was the Pine Grove track championship, and the **sun couldn't have been shining brighter**. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and yet **the heat was kept at bay**. Cora and Tess walked up to the track. There were athletes from several different schools, each donning a **different color uniform**. The field was **bustling with bodies**. Purple pole vaulters, blue long jumpers, sprinters darting around the track, and friends and **families roaring** in the bleachers. **The smell of popcorn wafted** through the air.

It was invigorating. It was the first time that either of them had been to a competition of this size. They looked at each other in wonder and **shivered as they heard the crowd cheer** as they watched the runners race.

"Are you feeling what I'm feeling?" Tess asked Cora.


"Is your **stomach tingling?**" answered Cora.

**"Butterflies!"** they both said in unison.



"All right, team! Our race will be up in the next 20 minutes. That gives us enough time to warm up and stretch. Let's head over to our spot," Coach Flock addressed the team. Mr. Flock was their teacher during the day and track coach after school.

### Describe the SETTING of your story here using sensory details.

 **List the tastes**

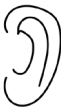
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 **List the sounds**

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 **List the smells**


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 **List the feelings**


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 **List the sights**

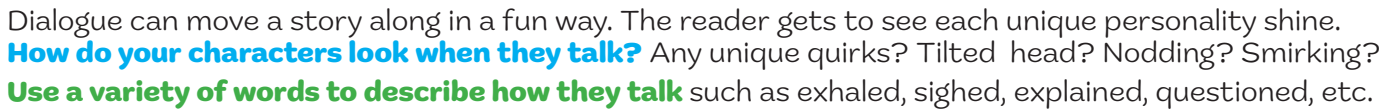
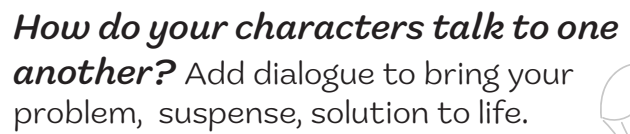
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They started towards their pit area and began stretching. They were there to run the 4x100m relay race. There were four different runners running 100 meters as fast as they could before passing the baton off to the next runner. It was an exhilarating race. Running as fast as their bodies would let them but doing it as a team. Cora and Tess were the last two runners of the race.

“They’re so fast,” **said** Cora.

“Oh yeah! Hey! We wouldn’t be here if we didn’t. Remember that! You earned this moment. You’re worthy of this moment. You worked hard for this moment. No matter what happens, whether we win or lose, always remember this moment, because you all deserve it.”

"Oh gosh! Here we go!" said Cora, **and the four runners started towards their positions on the oval, black track.**

Cora looked back 100 meters at Tess, whose eyes were wide with nerves. She was shuffling back and forth and looked like she hadn't exhaled in minutes.

“Hey!” Cora **shouted**. “We got this!”

[illegible]

**Look back at your dialogue. Can you add any personality? Can you describe what they look like in more detail? Can you use more descriptive words to tell how they talk?**





## Step 8:

### *The ending of the story is as important as the beginning.*

Typically, the beginning is used to grab the reader's attention, while the end **brings everything together and leaves the reader feeling satisfied**. You can even write your story starting from the end. You can let your ending guide your writing.

The ending can be the lone star that guides the creative process.

How is your story going to end? A happy ending? Suspenseful ending? A cliffhanger?

### EXAMPLE:

She crossed the finish line. She heard the crowd roar, but her head was down as she caught her breath. She didn't know who won yet. She looked up at the scoreboard. Team Pine Grove, 2nd place. She stood there, breathing heavily.

"Wow! That was a really good race!" the first-place winner said. She turned around to give Cora a hug. "Good race, my friend."

"Yeah. Same to you," Cora said. A new feeling was rising. Even though she didn't win, hugging her competitor and congratulating her felt just as good. Good sportsmanship felt really noble and good.

Cora and Tess walked towards the bus with their cleats hanging over their shoulders.

"That was fun," Tess said.

"For sure. I'd do it again in a heartbeat," said Cora.



**Write your ending to the story here.**



## Step 9:



*During this last step, we will be taking all the elements from above to create your story.*

You can use your setting description as a beginning or possibly create a new one describing how your character is feeling at that moment. **Tie the elements together using transition words, dialogue, and showing the reader what is happening** in the story. Next, you'll be connecting your sentences and ideas together to create a short story.

### EXAMPLE:

## Race Day

It was the Pine Grove track championship, and the sun couldn't have been shining brighter. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and yet the heat was kept at bay. Cora and Tess walked up to the track. There were athletes from several different schools, each donning a different color uniform. The field was bustling with bodies. Purple pole vaulters, blue long jumpers, sprinters darting around the track, and friends and families roaring in the bleachers. The smell of popcorn wafted through the air.

It was invigorating. It was the first time that either of them had been to a competition of that size. They looked at each other in wonder and shivered as they heard the crowd cheer as they watched the runners race.

"Are you feeling what I'm feeling?" Tess asked Cora.

"Is your stomach tingling?" answered Cora.

"Butterflies!" they both said in unison.

"All right, team! Our race will be up in the next 20 minutes. That gives us enough time to warm up and stretch. Let's head over to our spot," Coach Flock addressed the team. Along with being their science teacher during the day, he was their track coach after school.

They started towards their pit area and began stretching. They were there to run the 4x100m relay race. There were four different runners running 100 meters as fast as they could and passing the baton off to the next runner. It was an exhilarating race. Running as fast as their bodies would let them but doing it as a team. Cora and Tess were the last two runners of the race.

They watched the other racers warm up and started to feel really nervous.

"They're so fast," said Cora.

"Do you really think we have a chance Coach Flock?" asked Tess.

"Oh yeah! Hey! We wouldn't be here if we didn't. Remember that! You earned this moment. You're worthy of this moment. You worked hard for this moment. No matter what happens, whether we win or lose, always remember this moment, because you all deserve it."

A referee dressed in black and white approached their pit, "All right, Coach. Is your team ready? Your race is up in five minutes."

"Oh gosh! Here we go!" said Cora, and the four runners started towards their positions on the oval, black track. They were competing with three other schools, each athlete looking equally anxious.

Cora looked back 100 meters at Tess, whose eyes were wide with nerves. She was shuffling back and forth and looked like she hadn't exhaled in minutes.

"Hey!" Cora shouted. "We got this!"

Tess nodded and took her position on the track.

"Runners, on your mark. Set."

BANG! Went the starting pistol.

The first runner leaped off the starting block and was dashing towards the second runner. She was making great speed and was able to hold the lead. Cora watched as she reached the second runner and passed the baton. Cora felt elated as the second runner took off with the lead.

"This is happening. We might win," Cora thought.

Just as fast as she finished the thought, she watched in horror as the second runner tumbled towards the ground, causing the baton to fly out of her hand.

"No!" screamed Cora.

The second runner pushed off the ground with fierce determination, but their team was now behind by nearly 50 meters, and the other teams were practically flying. Tess had the baton now and ran towards Cora. Everything around them melted away. Locked in tunnel vision, Cora only saw Tess and only thought one thing: win. Tess was able to close the gap by 20 meters, but they were still 30 meters behind the lead runner.

"Reach!" Tess screamed, and Cora grabbed the baton.

With the baton in tow, Cora ran. She heard nothing except her breath, she felt nothing, and she saw nothing except a blur.

Faster. Faster. Faster. Push. Push, she told herself.

She was reaching the lead runner now only inches away from her.

Faster. Let go. Faster. Push, she thought.

She crossed the finish line. She heard the crowd roar, but her head was down as she caught her breath. She didn't know who won yet. She looked up at the scoreboard. Team PK, 2nd place. She stood there, breathing heavily.

"Wow! That was a really good race!" The first-place winner said. She had turned around to give Cora a hug. "Good race, my friend."

"Yeah. Same to you," Cora said. A new feeling was rising. Even though she didn't win, hugging her competitor and congratulating her felt just as good. Good sportsmanship felt really noble and good.

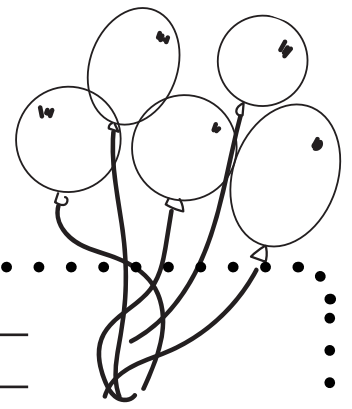
Cora and Tess walked towards the bus with their cleats hanging over their shoulders.

"That was fun," Tess said.

"For sure. I'd do it again in a heartbeat," said Cora.

# YOUR STORY:

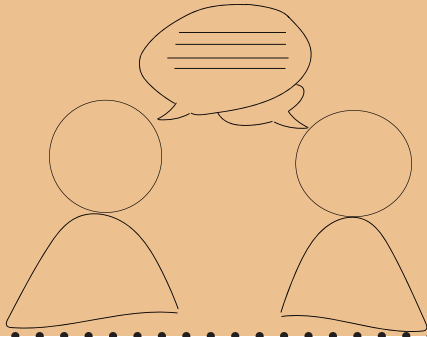
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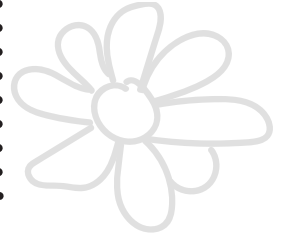
A large rectangular area for writing, enclosed by a dotted border. The area contains 20 horizontal lines for text entry.

## Conversation Corner

Once a student has completed the story, ask the following questions.  
*The questions have been designed to make their writing more vibrant and more detailed and to build their characters.*



- Why did you choose this topic to write about?
- Was there a part in your story where you became stuck with your writing? How were you able to overcome it?
- Is there anything in your story that you think happens in real life?



## Challenge Levels:



Challenge Levels are for young writers who are looking for a challenge or who want some more writing practice before going on to the next guide. Challenge Levels include short writing prompts that expand upon the story guide's lessons.

**Let's have some fun with your story.**  
**Use these challenges to play around with what you have just written.**

### Challenge Level One

*Let's get creative.*

- Start your story with a favorite lyric from a song. Make the song tie into your story.
- Will the characters speak the lyric?
- Will they hear the lyric playing on a loudspeaker?
- Will the characters sing the lyric on stage? Does the song have importance in your life, and how does it make your life better?
- Can it improve your story in any way?

### Challenge Level Two

*Let's add some dimension and depth to the story.*

- Add a story within your story.
- Your character could be telling the story, they could be watching a movie, they could be reading a story.
- Try to incorporate another story within your already short story.

