

How to Write Compelling Fiction

- Brainstorm a great story idea (think of small moments, places, events, issues, struggles, stories you wish existed in the world).
- Make your characters come alive (with traits, wants and challenges, self-attitude, relationships).
- Test-drive your character in scenes (envision and write actions, feelings, dialogue, setting, point of view).
- Plot several versions of your story, aiming to intensify the problem (use arcs, timelines, storyboards).
- Draft a 3-D story (story-tell bit by bit, include evidence of your characters' actions, thoughts, feelings).
- Manage space and time.
 - Use summary to quickly move a character across space and time.
 - Use transitional words and phrases to show changes in time or place.
- Become the main character, living through the drama of the story—and then allow your writing to unfold.
- Use paragraphs wisely (to move in place and time, to highlight something, for dramatic impact).
- Revise the lead—and hence the entire story (small action, mood, time and place, foreshadow).
- Research key facts to make the story more believable.
- Get rid of extra stuff that weighs the story down!
- Finish strong—make sure the ending shows what the story is really about, fits the story arc, ties up loose ends.
- As you revise (or draft) your stories, keep in mind these points:
 - Develop or increase conflict (tension, obstacles, trouble—between, among, or within characters).
 - Reflect on deeper meanings/central ideas of your story and consider objects, settings, actions that you can develop as symbols, images, or metaphors.
 - Listen to the rhythm and pacing of your sentences, then craft sentences of varying lengths and types to create the intended meaning, feeling, mood.