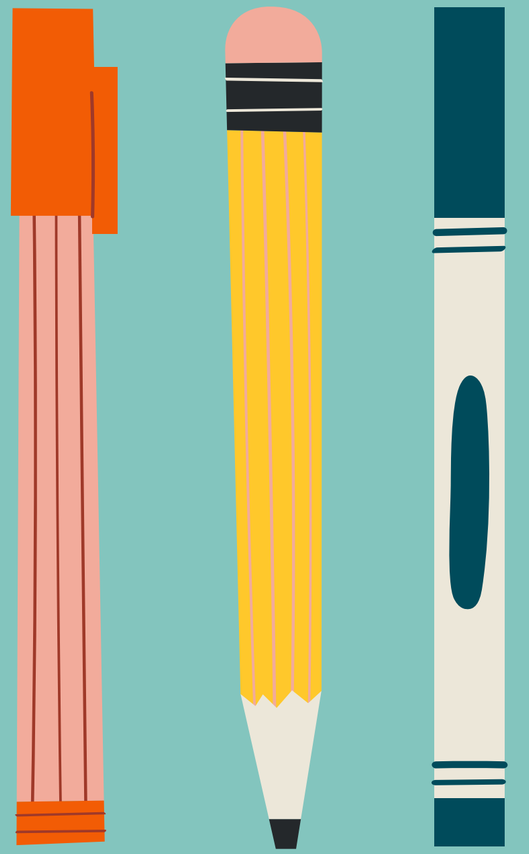
WELCOME

# CREATIVE WRITING



# Learning Objectives

- Story
- Planning
- Elements
- Structure
- Characters
- Show & Tell
- Edit & Feedback
- Resources

Everyone can write,

and today isn’t about perfection.

It’s about exploration.

# Writing & Discussion



## Write Without Fear

Your first draft doesn’t need to be perfect — it just needs to exist. Let the ideas flow. Surprising things happen when you put words on the page.



## Speak Boldly

Discussion is where stories grow. Share your thoughts, challenge ideas, and build on each other’s imagination. Every voice brings something powerful to the table.

# Who We Are.



## Presenters

### Dr Julia Evans

Business executive, publisher, and author

### Richard Evans

Novelist - 9 titles



## Participants

### One Sentence Warm-Up



Write one sentence about something strange or unusual they saw on the way to the workshop

- Introduction and ...
- What are your expectations today?

# STORY

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.”

- Philip Pullman

# What Is Story?

- **Story is how humans make sense of the world**
- **It’s character, conflict, and change**
- **For the reader,** it’s escape, empathy, and meaning.
- **For the writer,** It’s structure, purpose, and emotional truth.
- **If nothing changes, it’s not a story.**

# Story Entry Points



## Character - First

Start with a person — their desires, flaws, or voice — and build the story around who they are and what they want.



## Plot - First

Begin with an event — a twist, crisis, or situation — and let the story unfold from what happens next.



## Theme - First

Write from a big idea — a question or message — and explore it through characters and events.

# 1. Character-First

Example Prompt:

"She’s 83 and just ran away from her nursing home. Why?"

# 2. Plot-First

Example Prompt:

"A spaceship crashes in a cornfield. Nobody knows it’s from Earth."

# 3. Theme-First

Example Prompt:

"What happens when telling the truth destroys someone you love?"

# PLANNING

“Sometimes the ideas come to me before I have a plot.
Other times, I have a plot before I know the characters.
But I always plan — even if the plan changes.”
- JK Rowling

# What If ...

## The Engine of Every Story

This one question helps unlock imagination, stakes, and direction.
It turns an idea into a plot.

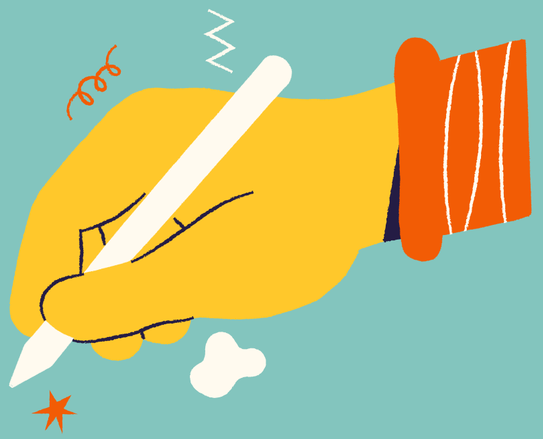
**Examples**:

- What if a girl fell into a world of talking animals? (Alice in Wonderland)
- What if your memories were erased every morning? (Memento)
- What if Britain became a nationalist police state? (Virus)

# Start a Story

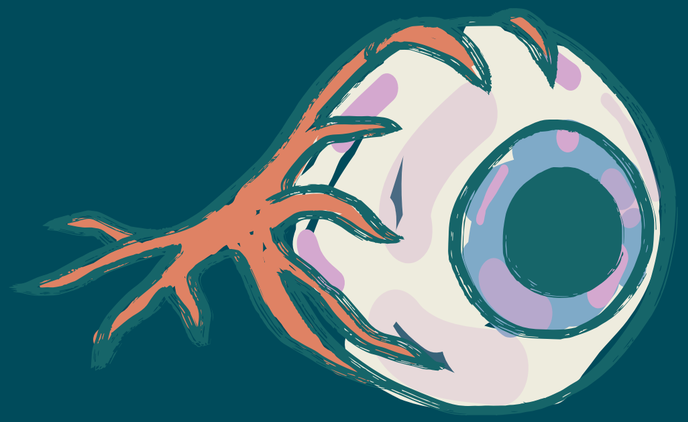


**Ask: "What if...?"**
**to spark your imagination.**



Character-first, plot-first, theme-first?

# STORY ELEMENTS





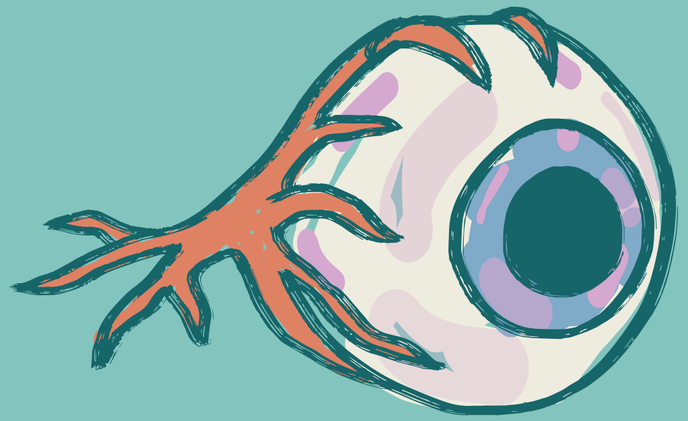


POV

CONFLICT

SETTING

# Point of View:



- **First Person**: immersive and personal.
- **Third Person** Limited: balanced perspective.
- Omniscient: like a god narrator.



# Conflict

## The engine of plot.

Protagonist must want something but face opposition.

**Types of conflict:**

person vs person,

self, society, nature.



# Setting

Not just place and time, but tone and symbolism

# Revisit Your Story



- Setting: Where and when?
- Conflict: What gets in the way?
- Point of View: Who's telling the story?



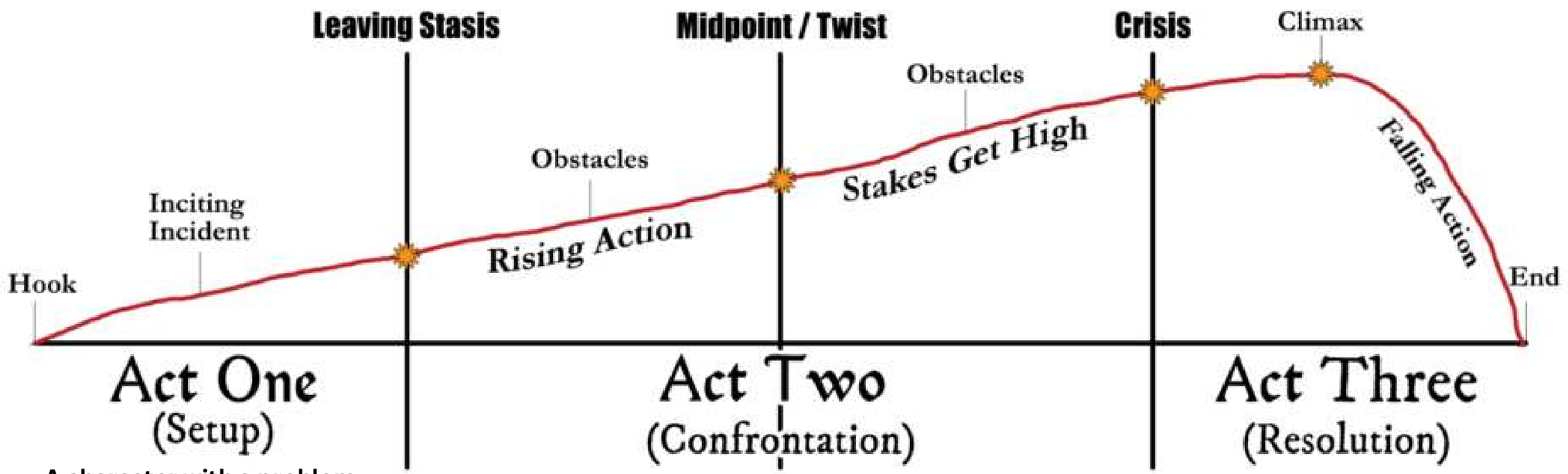
# STRUCTURE

“Every story has a shape. Find it,
and you can tell it.”
- Kurt Vonnegut

# Aristotle

## Beginning, Middle & End

# THREE ACT STRUCTURE




## Act One
(Setup)

A character with a problem.

**25 %**

## Act Two
(Confrontation)

Conflict intensifies

**60 %**

## Act Three
(Resolution)

Resolution or change

**15 %**

# ACT 1: Setup

## Purpose:

- Introduce the world, tone, character, and theme.
- Create emotional stakes.

# ACT 1: Setup

## Inciting Incident

- Something disrupts the status quo.
- Introduces the main problem or threat.
- The “What if?” moment becomes real.

# ACT 1: Setup

## Central Question

### It’s the story’s driving dramatic tension

It’s what keeps the audience reading, or listening.

- Creates tension and investment
- Defines structure
- Guides your plot
- Shapes character arcs

# Revisit Your Story



**What does your character want more than anything?**

**What’s stopping them from getting it?”**



# Act 2: The Confrontation

## Typically 3 to 5 major obstacles or conflicts.

- **Obstacle 1:** Tests their assumptions.
- **Obstacle 2:** Undermines their first plan.
- **Obstacle 3:** (Midpoint): Reveals something new or shifts the stakes.
- **Obstacle 4:** Feels like betrayal or internal failure.
- **Obstacle 5:** (Optional): All seems lost moment — leading into Act 3.

**These obstacles should:**

- Grow progressively harder
- Reveal character flaws and growth
- Force moral, strategic, or emotional decisions
- Lead toward the “darkest moment” just before Act 3 begins

# ACT 3: Resolution & Climax

## Purpose:

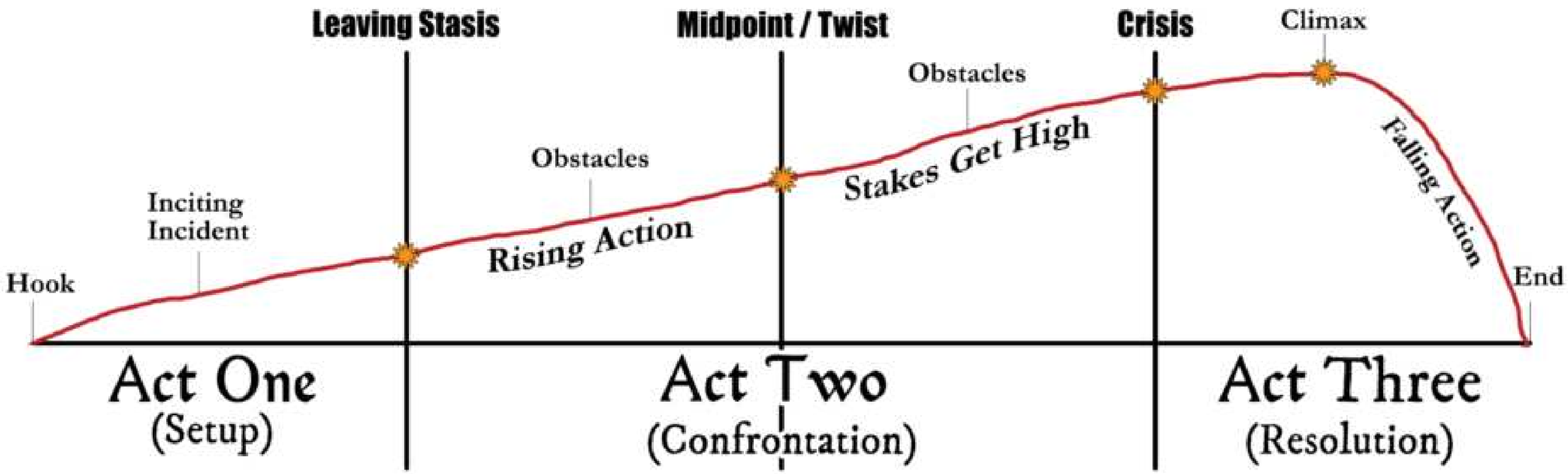
- Pay off what’s been set up.
- Resolve the central question.
- Show emotional transformation.

# Story Example

**Little Red Riding Hood.**

**Setup:** Girl sent to Grandma’s.
**Conflict:** Wolf eats Grandma.
**Resolution:** Woodsman saves her.

# THREE ACT STRUCTURE




## Act One
(Setup)

A character with a problem.

**25 %**

## Act Two
(Confrontation)

Conflict intensifies

**60 %**

## Act Three
(Resolution)

Resolution or change

**15 %**

# CHARACTERS

“A word after a word after a word is power, but it is the characters who carry that power.”
- Margaret Atwood

# What Makes a Great Character?

**Characters are not just names on a page — they are:**

- **Desires in motion:** Every great character wants something.
- **Flawed but fascinating:** Imperfection creates connection.
- **Shaped by choice:** Who they are is revealed by what they do.
- **Carriers of your story:** Plot happens because of them, not around them.

## Ask yourself:

What does my character want... and what are they willing to do to get it?

# Every main character should:

**Drive the story forward (protagonist)**

The character who changes (or tries to) the world around them

**Challenge or oppose the main character (antagonist)**

Not always the villain — just the main source of resistance

**Reflect, support, or complicate the journey**

(allies, foils, mentors, love interests)

Should serve a function — comic relief, exposition, moral compass.

# A character's role is about purpose.

**Ask:**

- What is their function in the plot?
- How do they challenge or change the protagonist?
- Could the story work without them?

# SHOW & TELL

“Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.”
- Anton Chekov

**Let your reader**
**see, hear, and feel**
**what's happening**
**— instead of just being told.**

**Quick Example:**

- **Telling:** She was angry.

- **Showing:** She slammed her fist on the table, eyes narrowing to slits.

# Choose better Verbs and Nouns

## Try not to use adverbs or adjectives

**Think of it like this:**

- **Weak**: He ran quickly down the hallway.
- **Stronger**: He sprinted down the hallway.

(“Sprinted” shows the speed. No need for “quickly.”)

- **Weak**: She was very sad.
- **Stronger**: She wept into her hands, shoulders shaking.

**Don’t just write ‘car.’ Write - beat-up Mini Cooper with a dented bumper.**

# Writing Exercise



- **Describe a single object in a room, but don’t name it directly**
  Let the reader guess what it is by using specific, vivid nouns that show its size, age, materials, purpose, and effect on the environment.

  Instead of:
  There was a lamp in the corner.



- **Rewrite the following sentence to show not tell.**

He slowly walked into the room, speaking softly to the assembled workers.

# EDIT & FEEDBACK

“Your goal isn’t to write words. It’s to write a story so compelling that readers forget they’re reading.”
— Jerry B. Jenkins

# Effective Editing & Revising



## If it doesn’t move the story forward, cut it.

Every line should serve the plot, deepen character, or heighten conflict. Remove filler, repetition, and backstory dumps. Be ruthless.

## "Said" is not dead.

Don't clutter dialogue with fancy tags or adverbs (he exclaimed loudly). Instead, use "said" or "asked," and let action or tone reveal emotion.

## Write cinematically.

Use vivid verbs and precise nouns to paint each scene. Show what’s happening like a movie playing in the reader’s mind. Action, tension, and movement keep readers hooked.

## Let the reader do some work.

Don’t over-explain. Suggest rather than tell. Trust readers to connect dots. Mystery and subtext make a scene richer and more engaging. little bit of body text. Hook the reader fast; explain later.

| Overwritten | Stronger Alternative |
| --- | --- |
| He sat down on the chair. | He sat. |
| She stood up quickly. | She jumped to her feet. |
| He nodded his head. | He nodded. |
| She shrugged her shoulders. | She shrugged. |
| He reached out his hand. | He reached. |
| She began to cry. | She cried. |
| He walked slowly across the room. | He crept across the room. |
| She looked at him angrily. | She glared at him. |

**Don’t say what someone did and how — say it in one stronger verb.**

# Editing Exercise



- He slowly walked across the quiet room and then sat down.
- She nodded her head in agreement before beginning to speak.
- The man stood up and reached out his hand to shake mine.
- I looked at him angrily and began to shout loudly.
- She started to cry as she sat down heavily on the couch.

# RESOURCES

# Free Training

You Tube - search creative writing lectures

-Experts
-University Courses
-Authors
-Sharks

# Writing Tools

Pro Writing Aid - Grammerly

Perplexity

Open AI

# Authors to Search

Joanna Penn

Robert McKee

James Scott Bell

Jerry B Jenkins

# Thank you

## QR Code

Resources from this session will be available for you **FREE** - PowerPoint, Notes and Handbook.