Story Components

**Plot**. The plot is "what happens" in a story.

* Using a ten-point-plot-line (a spider map, bullets, numbers, etc.) create the “what happens” in your story.

**Organization**. Think about this like a “timeline”. What happens, when? How do we know there is a change in time, in day, in scene?

* Some short stories follow the pattern of having rising action, a climax, and falling action.
* Others start in the middle of a crisis, then back up to take you back to the start.
* Have you ever considered using flashback to give your characters “backstory.”

I am not saying that you have to write a detective story, but there should always be a sense that there is something at stake for your characters.

Create a timeline for your story and think of interesting ways of organizing the story that will grab your markers attention.

**Characters.** Who is your main character? What is going to make me “root” for her/him? Is he/she part of a team? Who are the subordinate characters? Your story should have at least one character that your readers can care about and root for.

* What are his/her motives? What drives the characters? Why does your audience root for her/him?
* Is your protagonist sympathetic? Can we empathize with him/her?

Character Sketch

**Dialogue**. Dialogue can be considered the poetry in your story. What does your character “sound” like? What types of words would they use? Do they sound the same with their inner thoughts as they do with the things that they say?

Write a brief section where your character describes to a friend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Write the same description as if you are in the head of the character, listening to his/her inner thoughts.

**Point-of-view**. Point of view is the perspective that the story is told from. It can be told in the first person, second person, or third person. First person is directly from the perspective of a character, second person addresses the reader as "you," and third person creates a distance between the narrator and the characters.

**Setting**. Setting is where and when the story takes place. Setting can be crucial to a story. Just think to yourself, what if Star Wars were not set, “in a galaxy far, far away.” Would it be the same story?

What does your setting look like? Take us from a birds-eye-view, through the community, to the street of your character, and into the bedroom window of your character? What is on the wall? What colour is the bedroom furniture? What’s playing on the docking station? What is sitting open on his/her desk?