

How to Create a Children's Book Story Outline

Randy Whiteside | Creative Writing Magic

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Topics

1. Introduction: Hero's Journey Story Structure
2. Randy Whiteside, founder of Creative Writing Magic
3. Character Development: Main Character & Supporting Characters
4. Chapter 1: Time, Situation & Setting: Once upon a time
5. Chapter 2: The Shake up
6. Chapter 3: Action & Learning
7. Chapter 4: Resolution
8. Main Character: Character Arc
9. Action Items

1. Introduction

1. Hero's Journey Story Structure
2. Brought to public attention by Joseph Campbell with *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949)
3. Quest with Road of Trials and Villain
4. Main Character becomes something greater
5. Many examples in ancient and modern literature:
 - a. Greek Classic: The Odyssey, Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, The Matrix, and the Wizard of Oz.

2. Randy Whiteside | Creative Writing Magic

- Creative Writing Magic: Founded in 2018 to help authors improve their stories
- 12 years old, 6th Grade English Class: First Book Written & Illustrated
- Engineering & Corporate America
- Call to return to Writing & Illustrating
- *Travis & The Courageous Path*
- *How to Write a Short Story*

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3. Main Character & Supporting Characters

1. Main Character is the Focus of the Story

- a. Strengths
- b. Weaknesses
- c. Wants / Desires

2. Optional Supporting Characters

- a. Sidekick
- b. Mentor
- c. Villain

3. Main Character & Supporting Characters - Examples

3. Example: Wizard of Oz

- **Dorothy:**
 - Strengths: Loves her family
 - Weakness: Fear of Ms. Gultch
 - Wants / Desires: Something better (Somewhere over the Rainbow)
- **Supporting Characters**
 - Sidekicks: Scarecrow, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion
 - Mentor: Glinda, the Good Witch
 - Villain: Wicked Witch of the West

4. Time, Situation & Setting: “Once upon a time” (Chapter 1)

1. **The town/place that the Main Character calls home**
 - a. Time & Place
2. **Main Character’s situation in town/place**
 - a. Likes about their town
 - b. Dislikes about their town
 - c. Townspeople’s opinion of Main Character

4. Time, Situation & Setting: “Once upon a time” (Chapter 1) - Example

1. **Example: Wizard of Oz**
2. **The town/place that the Main Character calls home**
 - a. Time & Place: Kansas in the early 1900's
3. **Main Character's situation in town/place**
 - a. Likes about her town: Her family
 - b. Dislikes about her town: Rules about her dog Toto
 - c. Townspeople's opinion of Main Character: Family thinks she is not grounded. Ms. Gultch thinks Dorothy and Toto are a threat to the rules.

5. The Shake-Up (Chapter 2)

1. **Inciting Incident:**
 - a. Disruption to the Main Character's world
2. **Something New:**
 - a. Information, Villain, Weather
3. **Main Character is forced to do something about it**

5. The Shake Up Example (Chapter 2)

1. **Wizard of Oz**
2. **Inciting Incident:**
 - a. Disruption to the Main Character's world: The Twister!
3. **Something New:**
 - a. Information, Villain, Weather: The Wonderful Land of Oz
4. **Main Character is forced to do something about it**
 - a. Find the Wizard and then Obtain Ruby Slippers

6. Action & Learning (Chapter 3)

1. **Main Character Takes Action**
 - a. Attempts to fix the problem
 - b. Learns from efforts

6. Action & Learning Example (Chapter 3)

1. **Wizard of Oz**
2. **Main Character Takes Action**
 - a. Attempts to fix the problem:
 - i. We're off to see the Wizard
 - ii. Find a way home

7. Resolution (Chapter 4)

1. **Main Character solves their problem and their world is whole again**
 - a. Figures out the solution and solves the issue
 - b. Quest example:
 - i. Showdown with the Villain
 - ii. Return Home

7. Resolution (Chapter 4) - Example

1. **Example: Wizard of Oz**
2. **Main Character solves their problem and their world is whole again**
 - a. Showdown with the Villain: “I’m melting! I’m melting!”
 - b. Return Home: “There’s no place like home!”

8. Character Arc

1. **The Character Arc** is the change that the main character undergoes as a result of taking on the challenge of fixing the issue caused by the disruption.
 - a. In the Quest example: The main character must pass through a series of tests by which they learn new skills.
 - b. They use those skills to defeat the villain
 - c. In doing so, they main character undergoes a change for the better
2. Two Common examples of Character Arcs:
 - a. Main Character learns to love
 - b. Main Character learns to be brave

8. Character Arc Example

1. **Wizard of Oz**
2. **Fixing the situation caused by the twister:**
 - a. Series of tests: See the Wizard, Get Ruby Slippers
 - b. Gains confidence
3. **Dorothy's Character Arc:**
 - a. She proved to herself that she doesn't need to run away from her problems

9. Action Items

1. See How to Create a Children's Book Outline - PDF Worksheet
 - a. Become the Story Writer!