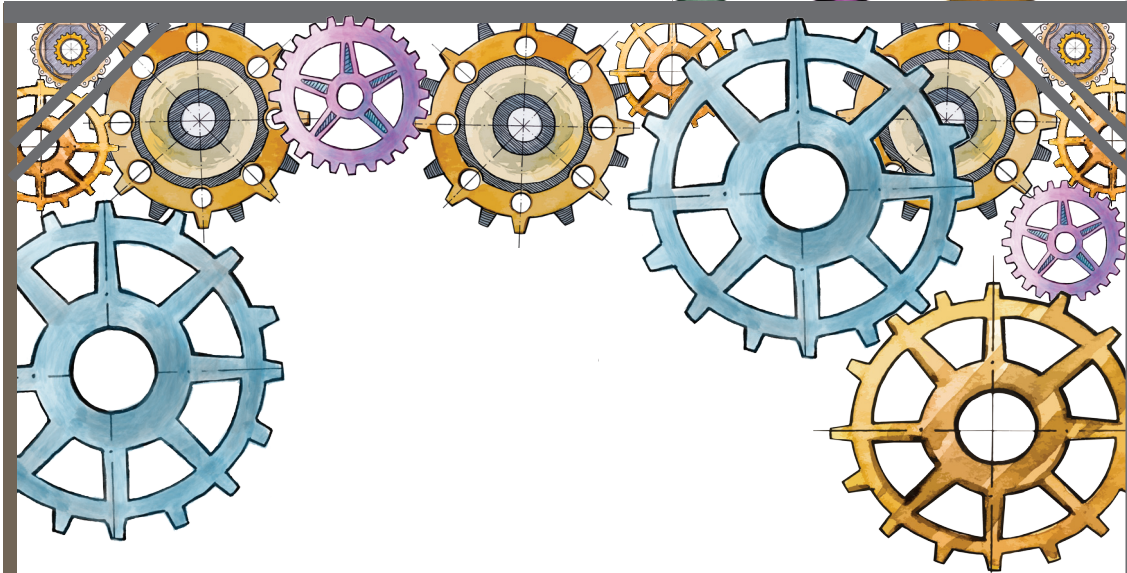


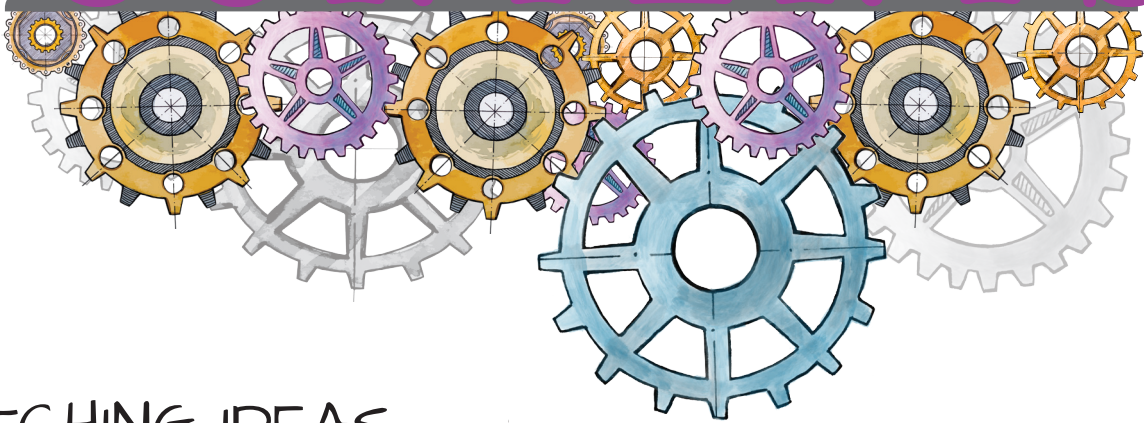


INKKLINGS LAB: DESIGN a NOVEL

By Naomi Kinsman



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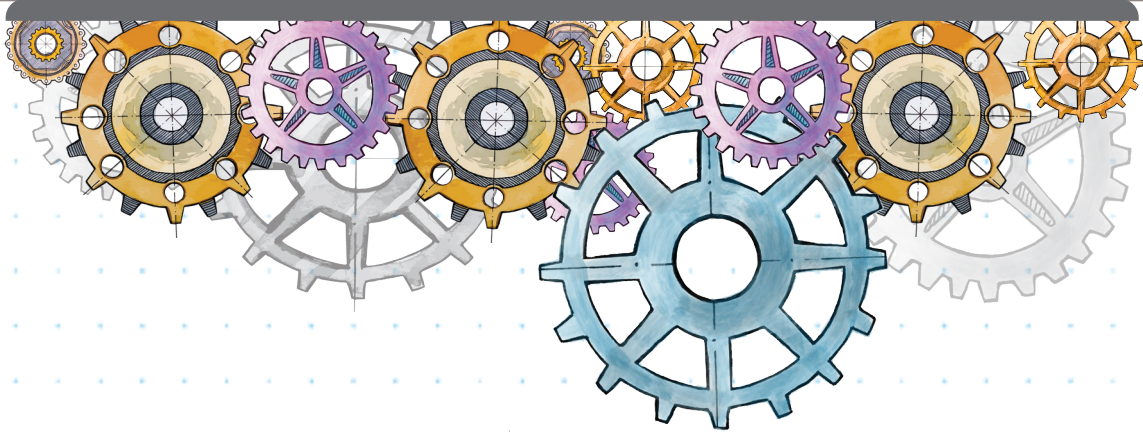
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PART ONE:

SKETCHING IDEAS





Dreaming up a novel is like designing a new building. As in construction, you'll make your story out of familiar materials—in this case characters, settings, conflicts, genre, and themes instead of wood, concrete, and glass—but like an architect, you'll want to give the novel your own unique twist. At first, you'll feel like all you're doing is making a choice and unmaking it again. Don't worry. Trial and error is part of the process.

One of the most fun parts of creating a novel is figuring HOW you like to do it. You have the freedom to invent your system as you go. Whether this is your first novel or your thirtieth, each book is a little different. The doorway into the world of this novel might surprise you.

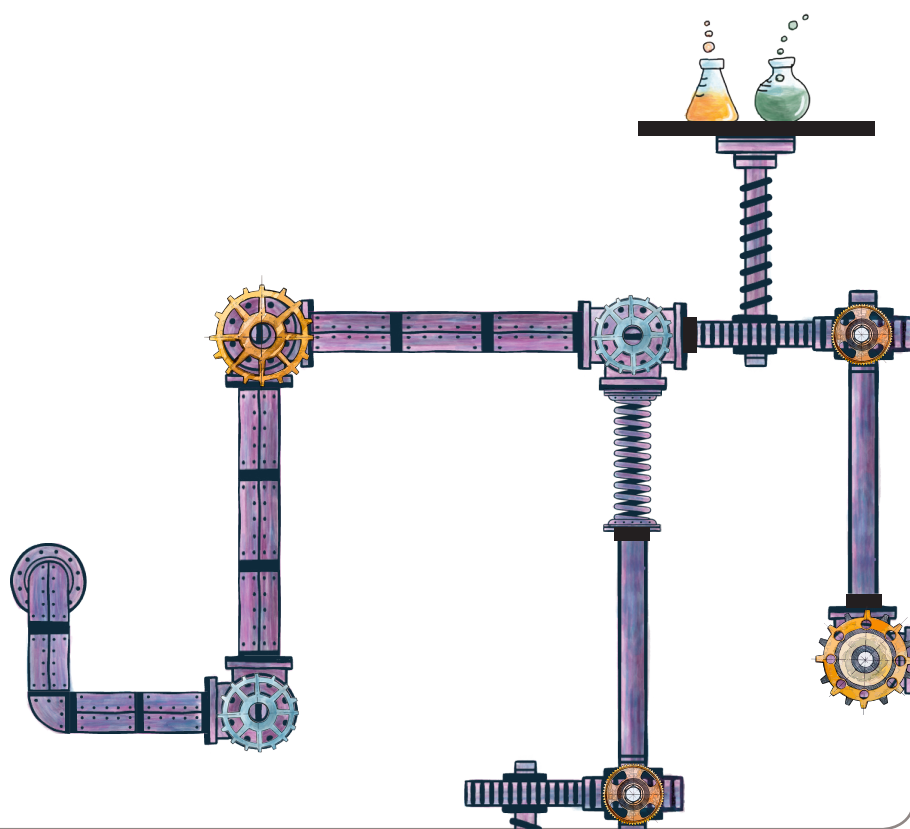
Stay as open as you can while we explore options. Maybe start with a character, and then try out a few settings. Or think of an exciting plot and try out a few possible main characters. Since drafting a novel takes quite a while, you want an idea that captivates your imagination, an idea you just HAVE to keep on writing to the end. If your first idea doesn't spark passionate curiosity, don't worry. Keep searching. You'll find an idea you love.

There are four main starting points that writers use to develop a novel: character, setting, plot, or theme. Somewhere along the way, they choose a genre. Some writers create a quirky character, and let the story grow out of the character's needs and dreams. Often these novels are realistic fiction. Other writers, particularly fantasy and science fiction writers, create an extraordinary setting and then populate it with characters. Writers who start with plot often write mysteries or thrillers. When writers start from theme, they choose a big idea or question they want to explore. Then, they create characters, settings, and a plot that all center on that theme. No matter which starting point writers choose, they eventually need all four elements. The best ideas, the most innovative ones, are ideas built in layers, where writers patiently explore each element instead of panicking when something unexpected doesn't immediately fit.


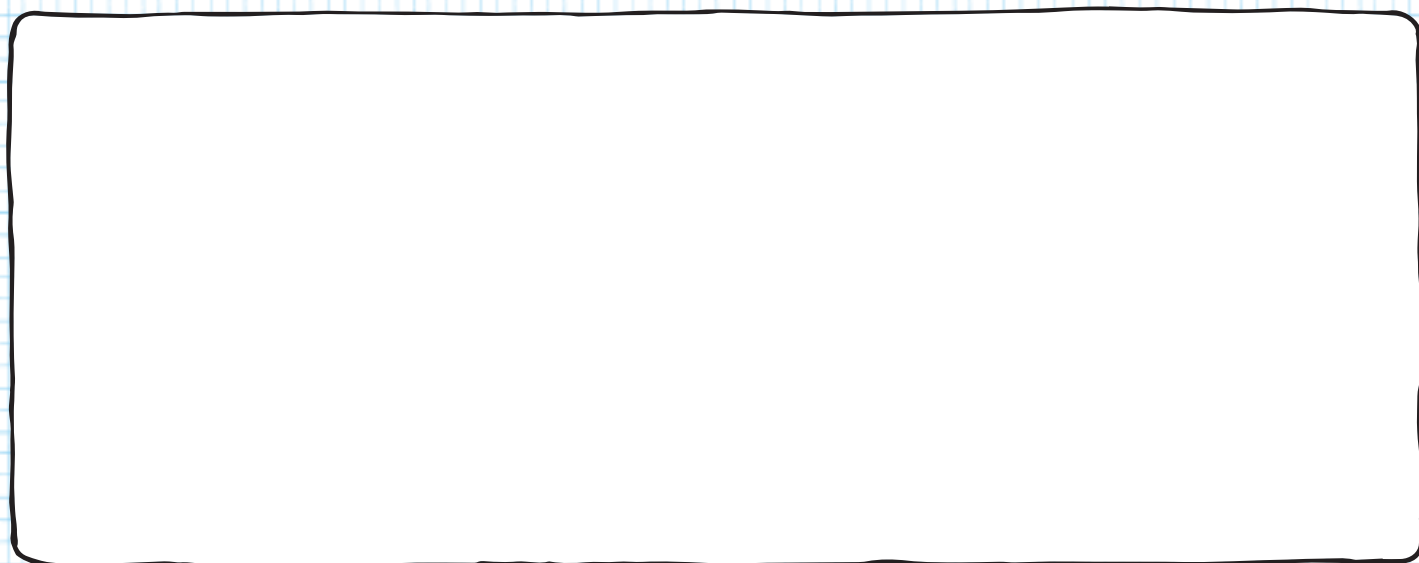
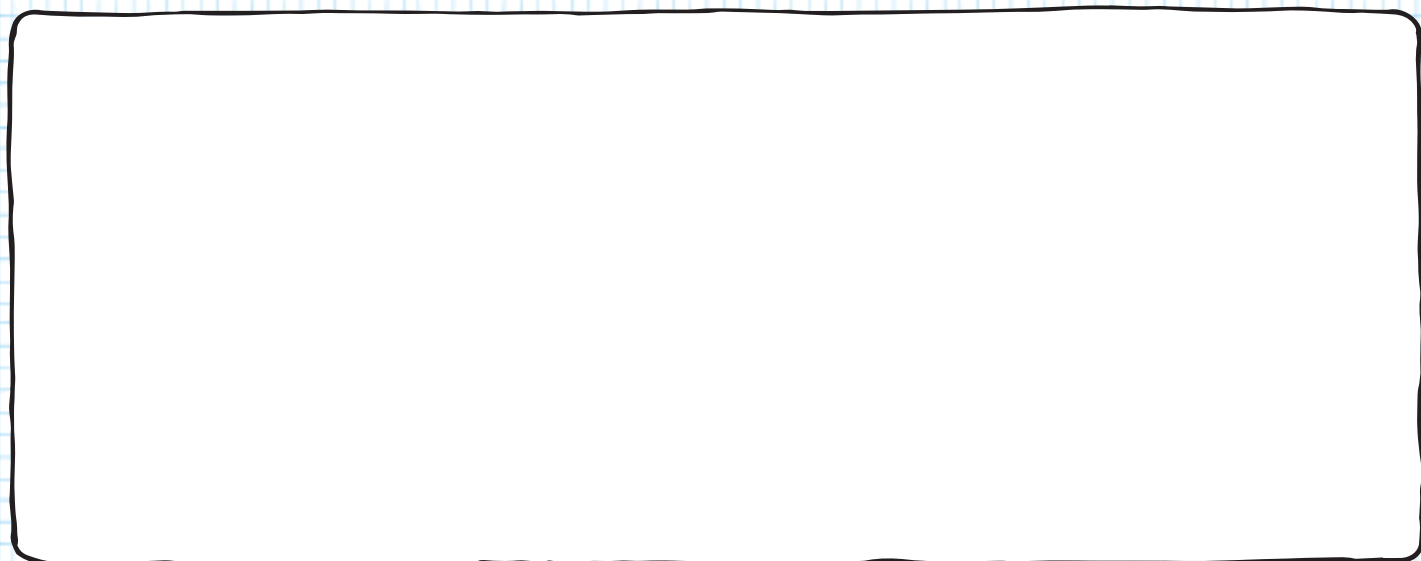
As you sketch ideas, use as many doorways as are useful. If you come across a dead end, turn around! All right? Ready to brainstorm?

CHAPTER ONE

EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES



Start by thinking of the books you love. Write the titles of three books here, and jot notes about what you like about them.



CIRCLE ANY ELEMENTS YOU'D LIKE YOUR BOOK TO INCLUDE.

(Remember, you can always change your mind later.)

THE PAST

THE FUTURE

MODERN TIMES

TECHNOLOGY

SCIENCE

MAGIC

SUPERHEROES

YOUR HOMETOWN

A FARAWAY PLACE

SCHOOL

WORK

HOME LIFE

AFTER SCHOOL
ACTIVITIES

VACATION

A CLUB

AN IMAGINED
WORLD

A BIG FAMILY

AN ORPHAN

A GROUP OF FRIENDS

A LONER

A QUEST

A CONTEST

A MYSTERY

AN ANIMAL CHARACTER

A PET

A SIDEKICK

A HAPPY ENDING

A SAD ENDING

A BATTLE OF WILLS

A CITY

THE OUTDOORS

GADGETS

WITTY JOKES

PHYSICAL COMEDY

DRAMA

SUMMER

WINTER

SPRING

FALL

DANGER

TIME TRAVEL

SPORTS

ART

POETRY

LETTERS

DIARY

MUSIC

ADVENTURE

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

CLUES

WISE ADVISOR

A VILLAIN

DISASTER

MAGICAL CREATURES

BATTLE

GENRE

Genres are categories of literature, grouped by style, form, or subject matter. Often readers will fall in love with a genre, say mystery or fantasy, and read as many books in that genre as possible. Look over the following list and consider which genre you'd like to write. Or, are you interested in combining genres?

REALISTIC CONTEMPORARY FICTION is about real life in our current world. Authors often draw from life experiences to develop ideas for realistic fiction. Story conflicts often come from a character's hopes and dreams. Realistic fiction can be set anywhere in the world, and can deal with any real-life problem. Examples of realistic fiction include *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green, and *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech.

HUMOR is often combined with other genres. However, some books are created with the primary goal of making readers laugh. Humor can come from quirky characters, from dialogue, from physical antics, and from ridiculous situations. Animals can be funny, as can slime, goo or mess. Timing is important in humor. Some examples of books that rely heavily on humor include the *Hank Zipzer* series by Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver and the *Joey Pigza* series by Jack Gantos.

MYSTERY is an element you'll find in many books. However, for a book to be categorized as a mystery, a character must act as a detective and actively solve a mystery. Usually mysteries involve crime or trickery. Detectives follow clues which lead to new leads or dead ends. When writing a mystery it is important to use foreshadowing to lay the groundwork for the eventual solution, but to also surprise your reader with the outcome. The more suspense and excitement, the more twists and turns, the better. Examples of mysteries include the *Sherlock Holmes* stories by Arthur Conan Doyle, the *Sammy Keyes* series by Wendelin Van Draanen, and *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett.

THRILLERS are similar to mysteries because they keep readers on the edge of their seats. In a thriller, the main character is not a detective, instead, they are exactly at the center of the puzzle. Usually solving the mystery is a personal life-or-death situation. For example, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins and *If the Witness Lied* by Caroline Cooney are both thrillers.

HORROR focuses on creating fear, dread, or repulsion in a reader. Horror is a close cousin of the thriller genre. Sometimes horror includes speculative or fantastical elements. *Doll Bones* by Holly Black and *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness are horror titles.

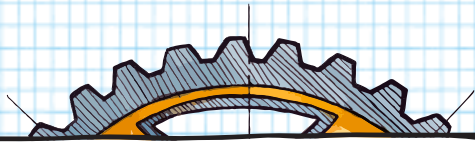
ADVENTURE is also an element of many stories, but the adventure genre usually involves a character trying to survive in an outdoor setting. Adventures are filled with danger and physical action. By facing challenges, the main character changes in a significant way. Two adventure titles include *Hatchet* by Gary Paulson and *The Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann David Wyss.

SPORTS FICTION explores the conflicts and drama involved in playing team or individual sports. Like adventure, sports fiction works best when the plot doesn't simply challenge the main character to win, but also to grow personally. Examples of sports fiction include *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup* by Ronald Koertge, *Crossover* by Kwame Alexander, and *Slam!* by Walter Dean Myers.

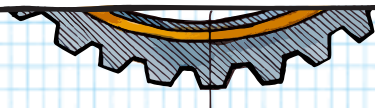
HISTORICAL FICTION is any story set in the past. Sometimes historical fiction includes time travel, placing a modern character into a past setting. Most times, historical fiction involves a mixture of facts about people, events, or places, plus fictional elements created by the author. Historical fiction requires careful research to accurately represent the time period. Examples of historical fiction include *Code Name Verity* by Elizabeth Wein and *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis.

FANTASY encompasses supernatural and paranormal fiction, animal stories, and all stories having to do with magic. Technically, any book that involves elements beyond the reach of reality is considered a fantasy. Examples of fantasy include the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling, and *Daughter of Smoke and Bone* by Laini Taylor.

SCIENCE FICTION explores the possibilities of technology and scientific advances. As opposed to fantasy, science fiction builds on scientific principals to invent technology that could be possible someday. Often science fiction explores the societal implications of such scientific advances. Examples of science fiction include *Feed* by M.T. Anderson and *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card.



WHAT ARE YOUR AREAS OF EXPERTISE?



WHAT DO YOU OFTEN WONDER
OR SEEK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?



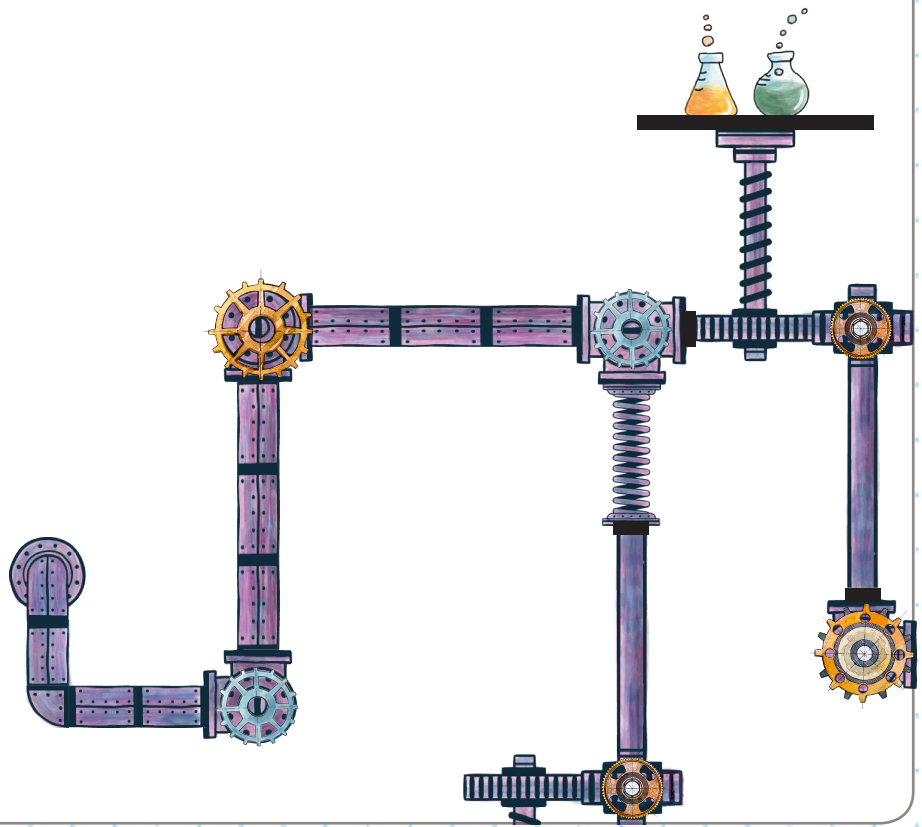
FOR SURE POST-ITS

INTRIGUING POST-ITS

WHAT IF... ?

CHAPTER TWO

SKETCHING A CONCEPT



Mad Lib Warm Up

YOUR NAME: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

ING VERB: _____

NOUN: _____

FEELING: _____

FEELING: _____

FEELING: _____

FAVORITE AUTHOR: _____

ONE REASON YOU LIKE THEM: _____

ARTIST OR MUSICIAN: _____

ONE REASON YOU LIKE THEIR STYLE: _____

T.V. SHOW/MOVIE: _____

ONE REASON YOU LIKE IT: _____

BEVERAGE YOU ENJOY: _____

CHARACTER IN YOUR BOOK: _____

QUESTION ABOUT THAT CHARACTER: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

LOCATION IN A HOUSE: _____

READER NAME: _____

Mad Lib Warm Up

DEAR _____,
YOUR NAME

I REALLY LOVED YOUR _____ BOOK. BY THE TIME I GOT TO THE END
ADJECTIVE
OF THE FIRST PAGE, I WAS ALREADY _____. YOUR STORY FILLED
ING VERB

ME WITH _____ AND MADE ME FEEL _____,
NOUN FEELING FEELING
AND _____.
FEELING

YOUR STYLE REMINDS ME OF _____ BECAUSE YOU _____
FAVORITE AUTHOR

REASON
_____. YOUR BOOK ALSO REMINDED ME OF

MUSICIAN/ARTIST BECAUSE _____
REASON

_____ AND _____
T.V. SHOW/MOVIE

BECAUSE _____
REASON

IF I COULD MEET YOU IN PERSON, I'D WANT TO SIT DOWN WITH YOU AND

DRINK _____ AND TALK ABOUT _____.
BEVERAGE CHARACTER

I'D ASK YOU _____
QUESTION

THANKS AGAIN FOR WRITING SUCH A/AN _____ BOOK. I'M
ADJECTIVE

PUTTING IT _____ AND CAN'T WAIT
LOCATION

TO READ IT AGAIN.

YOURS, _____
READER NAME

I could write about a character who excels at:

But struggles to:

I could write about a character who wants:

But this is in their way:

I could write about a character who needs to:

Because:

I could write about a character who is similar to me in this way:

But different than me because:

I could write about a place
where people can:

But they can't:

I could write about a place
full of:

But there is no:

I could write about a place
with this problem:

And the people can't solve it
because:

I could write about a place
similar to our world because:

But different than our
world because:

I could write a novel where this mystery has to be solved:

I could write a novel where this kind of hero:

Has to face this kind of villain:

I could write a novel where this quest must be completed:

I could write a novel where this impossible challenge is faced:

One thing I think should be different about the world:

One question I wonder about:

One thing I'd never give up:

One right I think everyone should have:

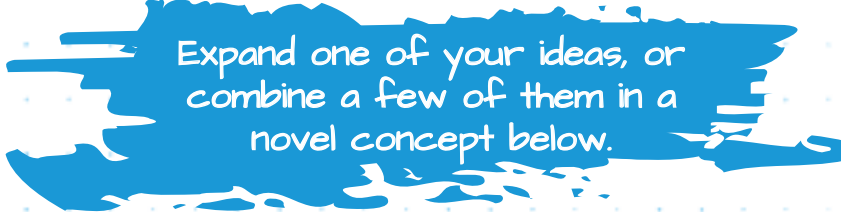
NOTES ON MY IDEAS

NOTES ON MY IDEAS

WHY CHOOSING MATTERS...

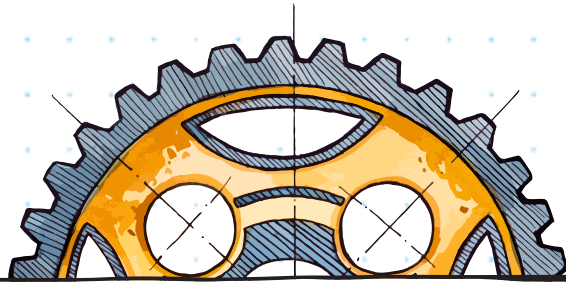
So many stories have been written, for thousands of years, it's nearly impossible to find a brand new idea. Still, every year, new books come out that surprise and delight us. How do authors create these original stories?

The secret is in the details. We may have read hundreds of who-did-it mysteries, but we haven't read yours. Maybe you're an ocean expert, and you also know how to play the tuba. Your mystery might include tuba-playing pirates. Or maybe you just went on a field trip to a factory and you are currently on a personal quest to find the best tasting root beer in the world. Maybe your mystery will take place in a root-beer factory. The more specific choices you make, the more unique your story becomes. Look over your ideas, think about genre, and explore your options.



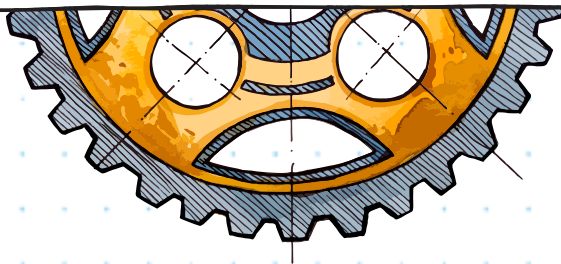
Expand one of your ideas, or combine a few of them in a novel concept below.

Expand another idea here.
Challenge yourself to explore an
entirely different possibility.



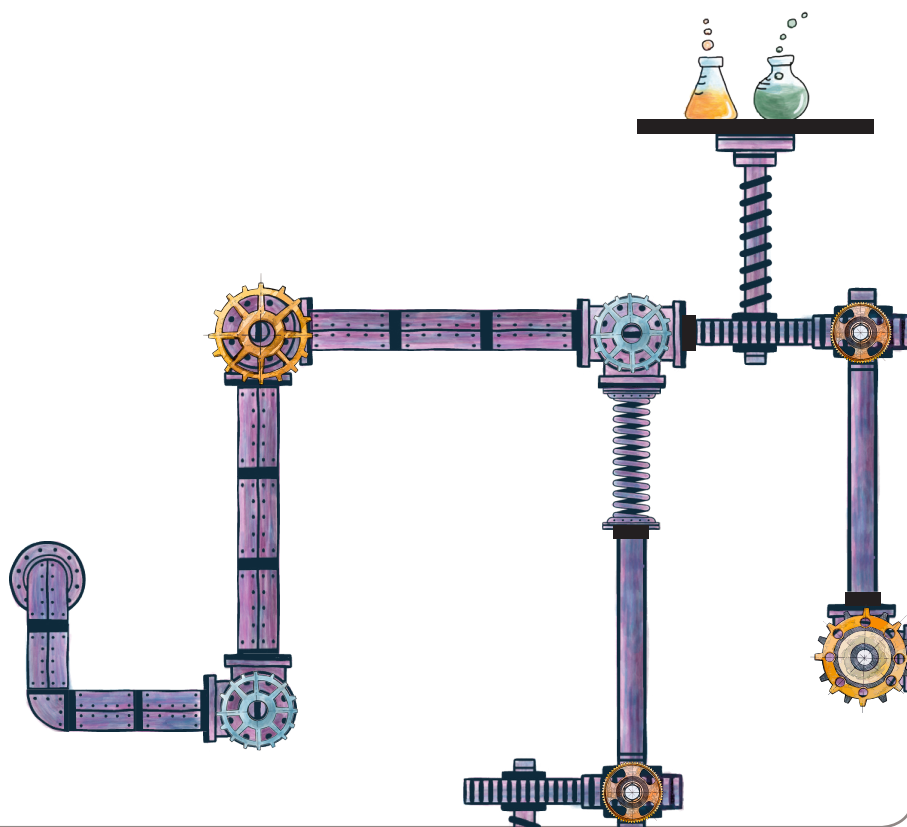
DECISION MAKING TRICKS

- FLIP A COIN.
- WRITE ONE SCENE FOR EACH IDEA & COMPARE.
- COMBINE YOUR IDEAS.
- DON'T CHOOSE! DO ONE NOW & ONE LATER.
- ASK: WHICH ONE MATTERS MOST TO ME?
- ASK: WHICH ONE WOULD BE THE MOST FUN?
- ASK: WHICH ONE WOULD I WANT TO READ?



CHAPTER THREE

CLARIFYING THE CONCEPT



COVER UP THESE WORDS WITH
YOUR COLLAGE. INCLUDE COLORS,
TEXTURES, IMAGES AND WORDS THAT
FIT THE CONCEPT AND TONE OF
YOUR NOVEL CONCEPT.

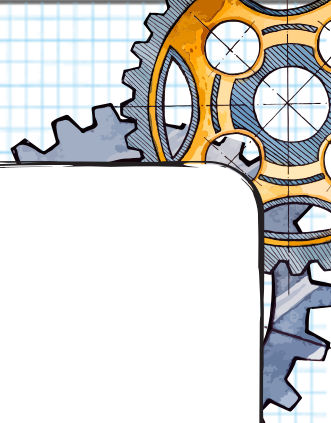
USE THIS PAGE TOO!

INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

CAPTURE THOUGHTS AND INSIGHTS FROM
YOUR AUTHOR INTERVIEW.

The worksheet is designed for capturing interview highlights. It consists of four large rectangular boxes with rounded corners, arranged in a 2x2 grid. Two speech bubble shapes are overlaid on the grid: one in the center-left and one in the bottom-right. The speech bubbles are white with black outlines and are positioned to overlap the rectangular boxes. The entire page has a light blue grid background.

DESIGN A POSSIBLE COVER HERE.

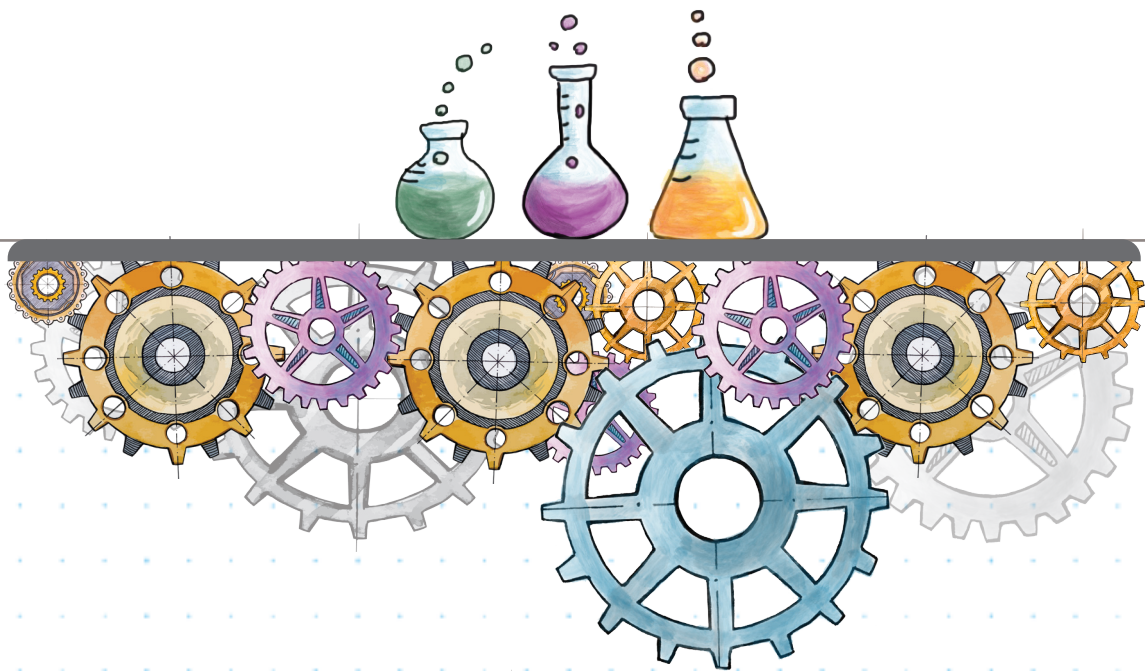


COVERS CONVEY A BOOK'S MAIN
IDEA. CONSULT YOUR FAVORITE
BOOKS FOR INSPIRATION.

[illegible]

PART TWO:

CRAFTING CHARACTERS





A novel requires a cast of characters, including a main character, a number of secondary characters, and, most likely, a villain, too.

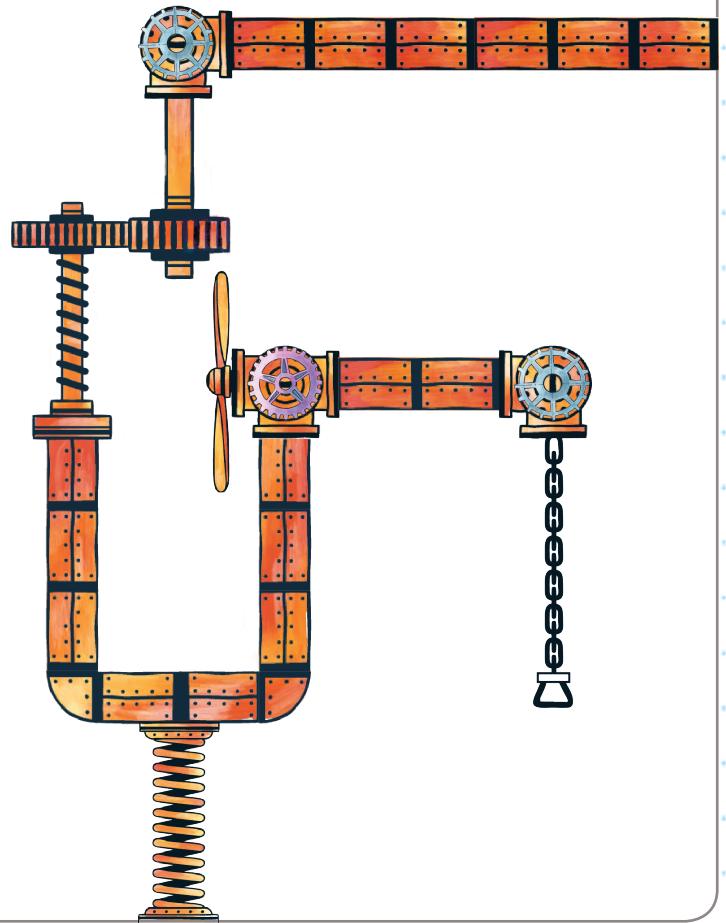
You need a main character, one with whom your reader will identify, believe in, and cheer on. If you choose to have more than one viewpoint character, keep in mind that both must experience a significant change in the novel. In fact, viewpoint characters should undergo emotional growth in each scene. This growth builds up until your character comes to a crisis point—the climax—and something significant changes. In the climax, a strong character gains something (physical or intangible) that he or she needs, achieves a goal, or overcomes a challenge once and for all.

Secondary characters create drama and add layers to your plot. You can use a sidekick to add humor, perspective, assistance, and more. An authority figure such as a teacher, boss, or parent often creates obstacles for your main character. Quirky characters such as a shopkeeper, a postman, or a talking rabbit can provide your character with information and move the story forward. Sometimes a group of characters introduces an entire subplot for your novel. This secondary conflict relates to the primary one. You probably will also need characters to populate various settings, such as students for school, brothers and sisters for home, goblins who help the villain, etc.

Villains can be as evil or everyday as you choose. We also call them antagonists. Basically, an antagonist is anyone whose goals and actions get in your main character's way. So, an antagonist could be a teacher or a friend, because people we spend the most time with are also most likely to create obstacles for us. Some stories revolve around a conflict between your character and the antagonist. However, many stories are about an internal or external problem. The antagonist is secondary, and makes the problem worse. Creating a person your main character must face adds drama and heightens the stakes in your novel.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPING YOUR MAIN CHARACTER



PROFILE of my MAIN CHARACTER

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Three adjectives to describe my character: _____

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

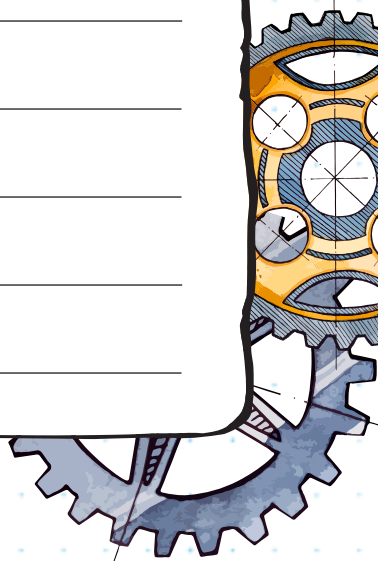
AT THE START OF THE STORY, MY CHARACTER WANTS: _____

MY CHARACTER FEARS: _____

MY CHARACTER (MISTAKENLY) BELIEVES: _____

WHAT HAPPENED TO CREATE THIS BELIEF: _____

MY CHARACTER'S ACTIONS: _____



PROFILE of my MAIN CHARACTER

My character never leaves home without: _____

My character's closest friend is: _____

Other friends my character would invite for a special party : _____

My character's pet(s): (if they don't have a pet, would they want one? What kind?) _____

My character's family includes: _____

My character lives in: _____

Things that irritate my character: _____

Things that make my character laugh: _____

SNAPSHOTS of my MAIN CHARACTER

A PROUD MOMENT

A GIFT GIVEN

A GIFT RECEIVED

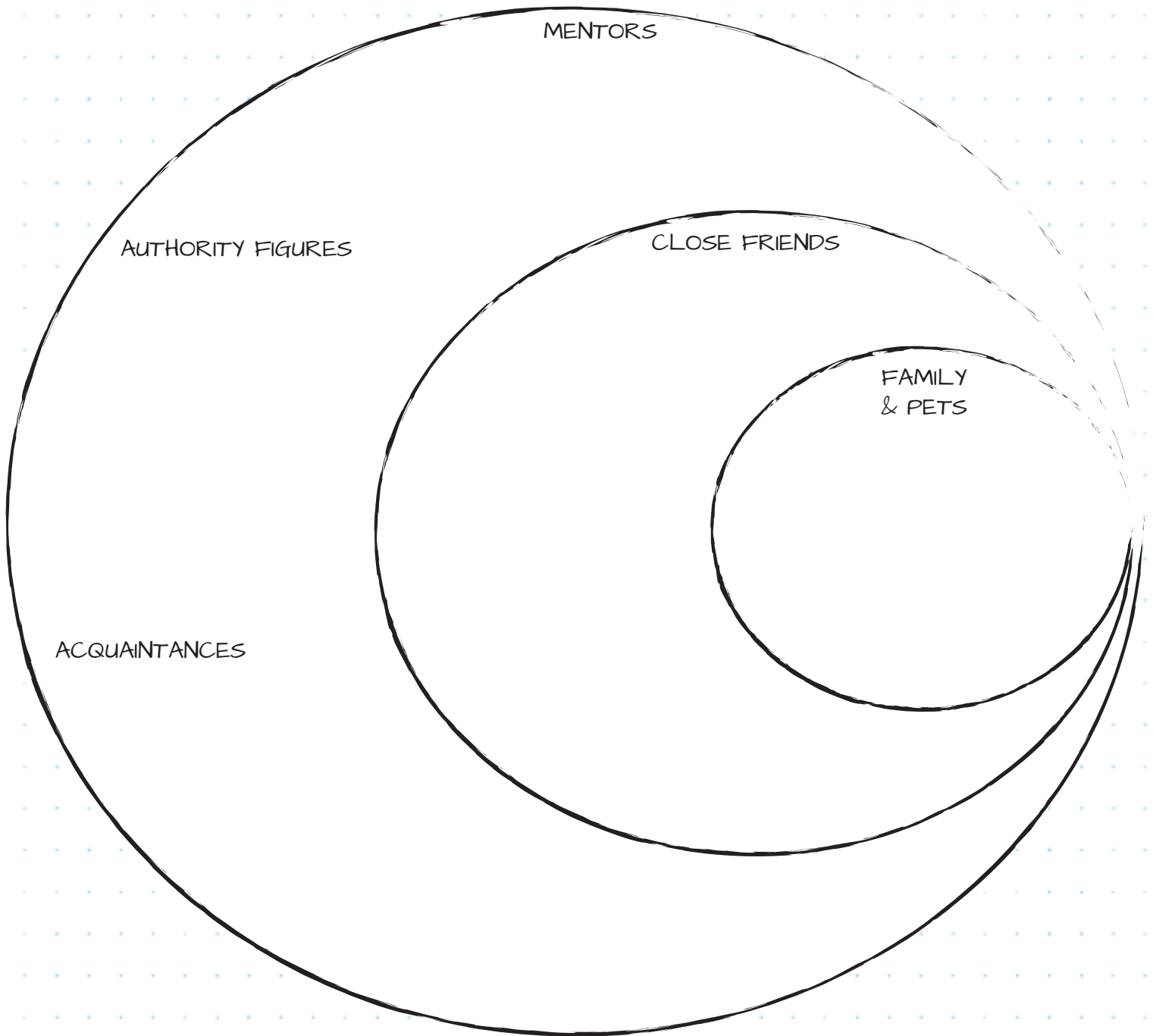
A LEARNING MOMENT

A JOYFUL MOMENT

A REGRETFUL MOMENT

CHARACTER BRAINSTORM

AS THE STORY STARTS...



ENEMIES

CHARACTER BRAINSTORM

THROUGHOUT THE STORY

MEMORABLE CHARACTERS
ALONG THE WAY

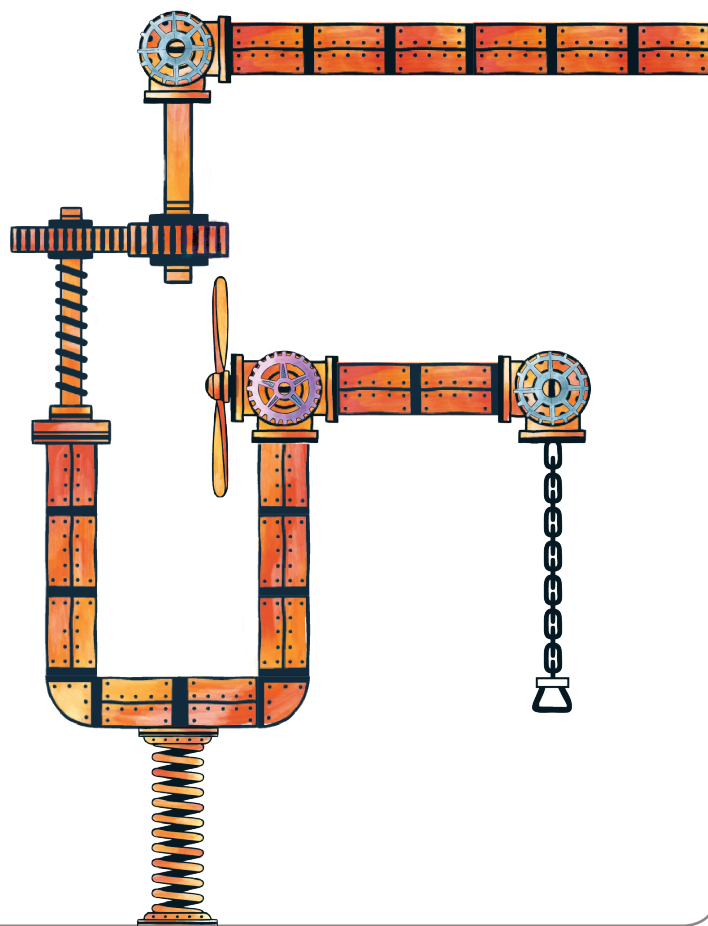
ADVISORS & GUIDES

CONFIDANTS

ANTAGONISTS

CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPING YOUR CAST



CHARACTER PROFILE

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

My main character calls this character: _____

Adjectives my main character would use to describe this character: _____

Adjectives this character would use to describe themselves: _____

This character's strengths: _____

This character's weaknesses: _____

Things that make this character laugh: _____

Things that irritate this character: _____

This character never leaves home without : _____

This character wants: _____

Similarly to my main character, this character believes: _____

In contrast to my main character, this character believes: _____

This character helps my main character by: _____

This character gets in my main character's way by: _____

A regular day in this character's life looks like: _____

CHARACTER PROFILE

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

My main character calls this character: _____

Adjectives my main character would use to describe this character: _____

Adjectives this character would use to describe themselves: _____

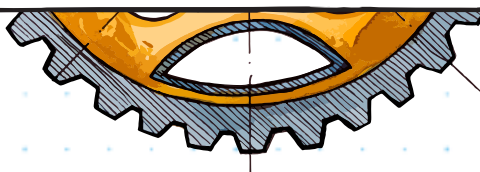
This character's strengths: _____

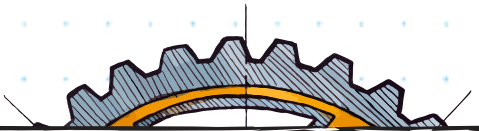
This character's weaknesses: _____

Things that make this character laugh: _____

Things that irritate this character: _____

This character never leaves home without: _____





This character wants: _____

Similarly to my main character, this character believes: _____

In contrast to my main character, this character believes: _____

This character helps my main character by: _____

This character gets in my main character's way by: _____

A regular day in this character's life looks like: _____

CHARACTER PROFILE

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

My main character calls this character: _____

Adjectives my main character would use to describe this character: _____

Adjectives this character would use to describe themselves: _____

This character's strengths: _____

This character's weaknesses: _____

Things that make this character laugh: _____

Things that irritate this character: _____

This character never leaves home without : _____

This character wants: _____

Similarly to my main character, this character believes: _____

In contrast to my main character, this character believes: _____

This character helps my main character by: _____

This character gets in my main character's way by: _____

A regular day in this character's life looks like: _____

CHARACTER PROFILE

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

My main character calls this character: _____

Adjectives my main character would use to describe this character: _____

Adjectives this character would use to describe themselves: _____

This character's strengths: _____

This character's weaknesses: _____

Things that make this character laugh: _____

Things that irritate this character: _____

This character never leaves home without : _____

This character wants: _____

Similarly to my main character, this character believes: _____

In contrast to my main character, this character believes: _____

This character helps my main character by: _____

This character gets in my main character's way by: _____

A regular day in this character's life looks like: _____

CHARACTER PROFILE

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

My main character calls this character: _____

Adjectives my main character would use to describe this character: _____

Adjectives this character would use to describe themselves: _____

This character's strengths: _____

This character's weaknesses: _____

Things that make this character laugh: _____

Things that irritate this character: _____

This character never leaves home without : _____

This character wants: _____

Similarly to my main character, this character believes: _____

In contrast to my main character, this character believes: _____

This character helps my main character by: _____

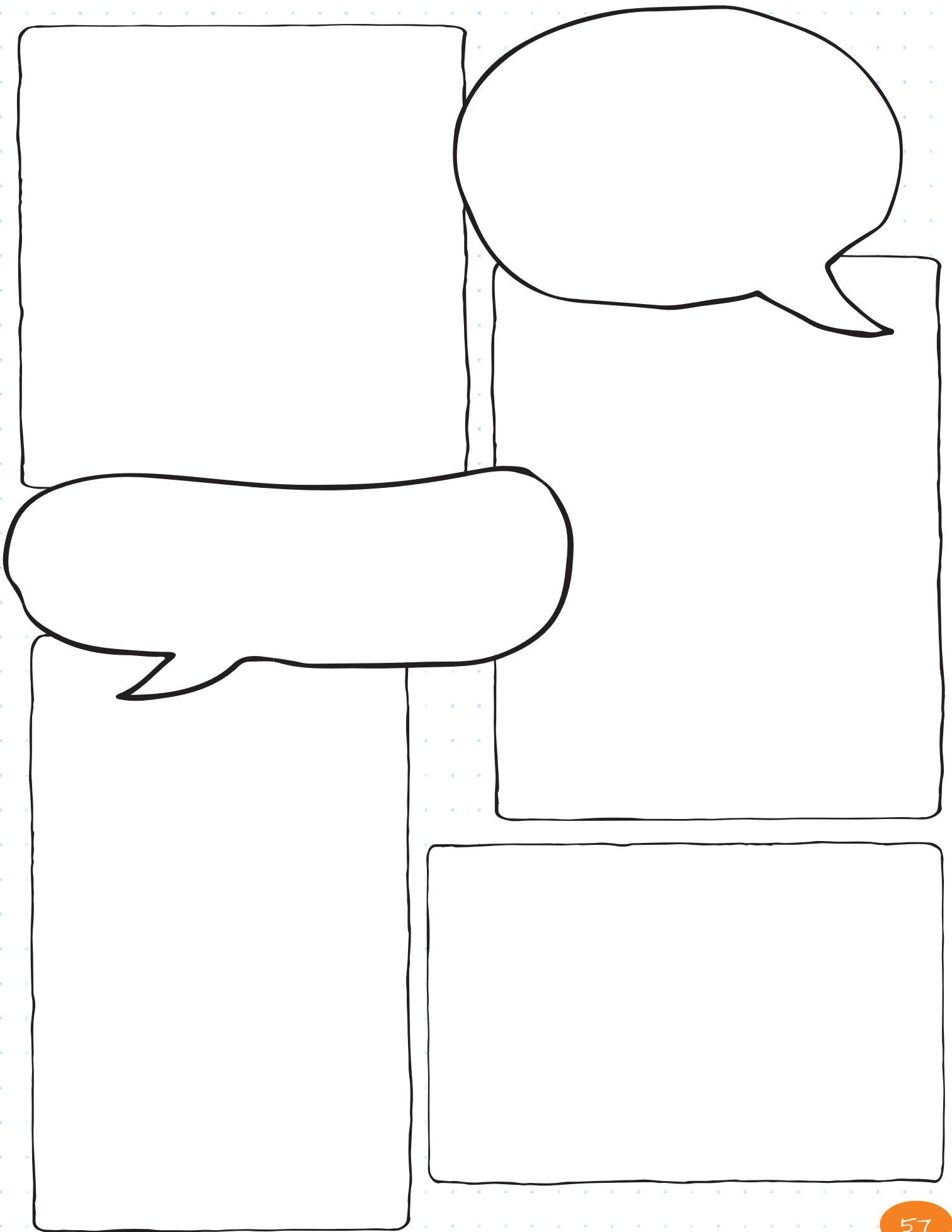
This character gets in my main character's way by: _____

A regular day in this character's life looks like: _____

A hand-drawn comic strip template on a blue dotted background. It features five rectangular panels and one speech bubble. The panels are arranged in a 2x2 grid with a fifth panel at the bottom right. A speech bubble is positioned in the center, overlapping the four panels in the top half of the page.

WHAT MIGHT YOUR CAST SAY WHEN
RECOMMENDING (OR NOT) YOUR MAIN CHARACTER?

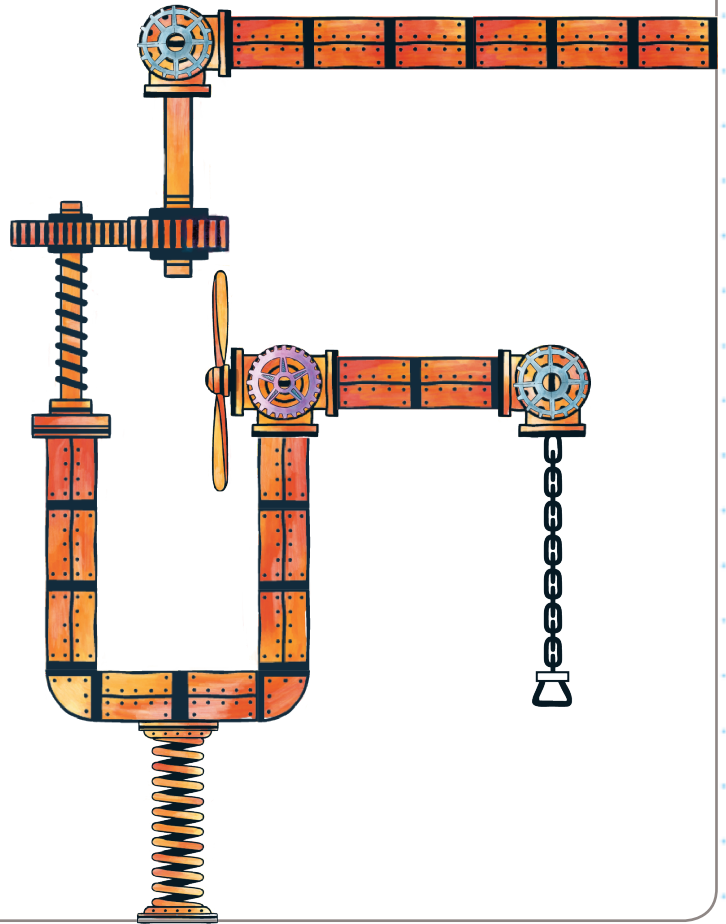
IN THEIR WORDS



VOICE EXAMPLES

CHAPTER SIX

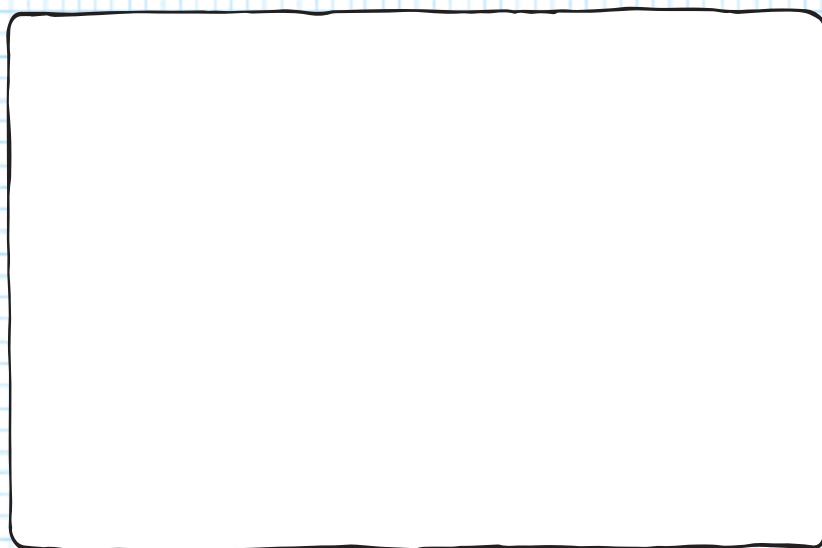
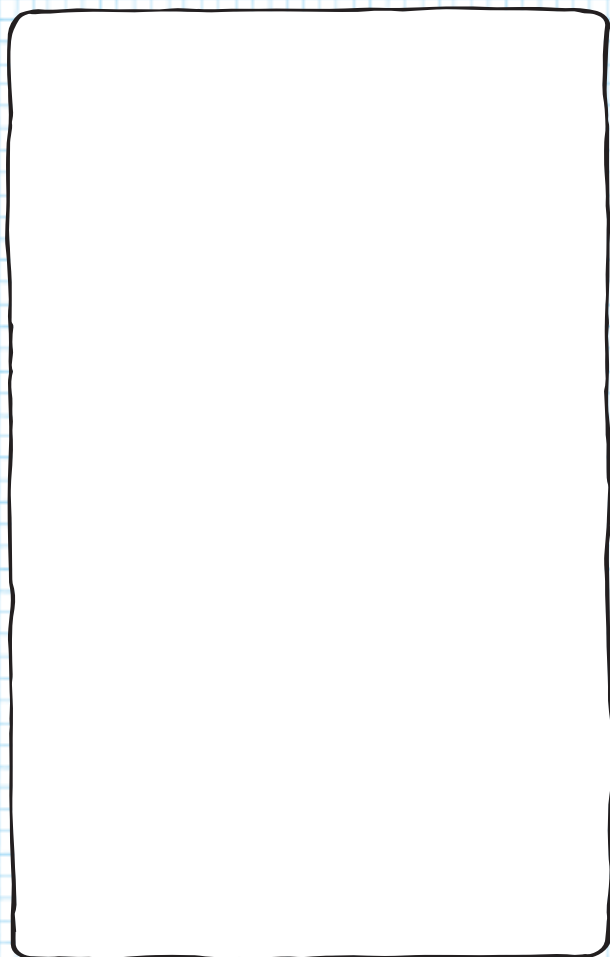
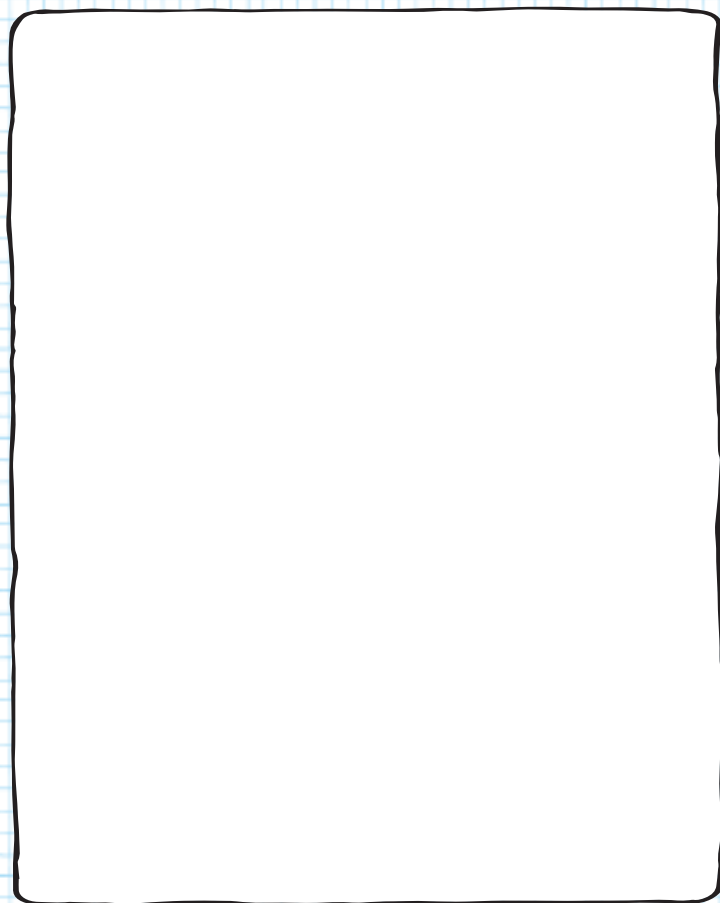
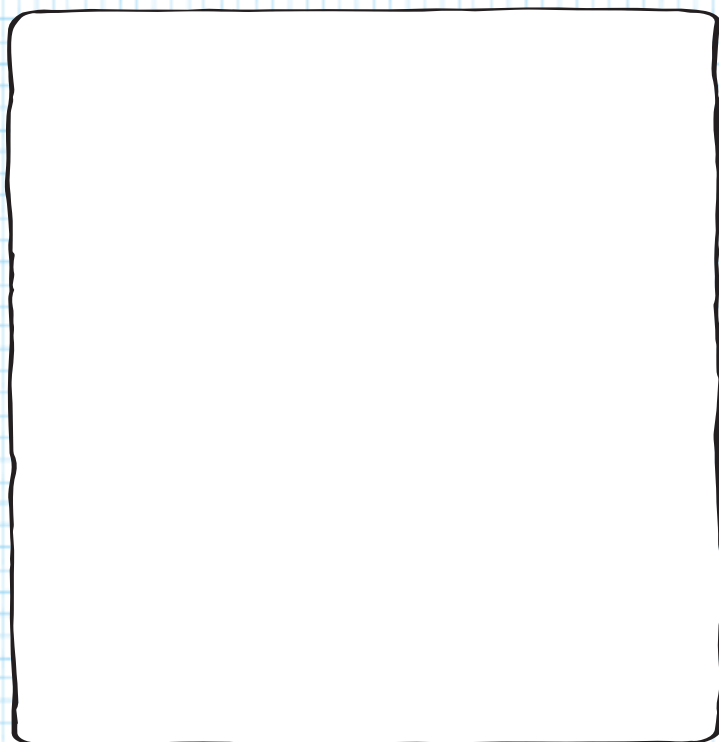
DEVELOPING BACKSTORY & BELIEFS

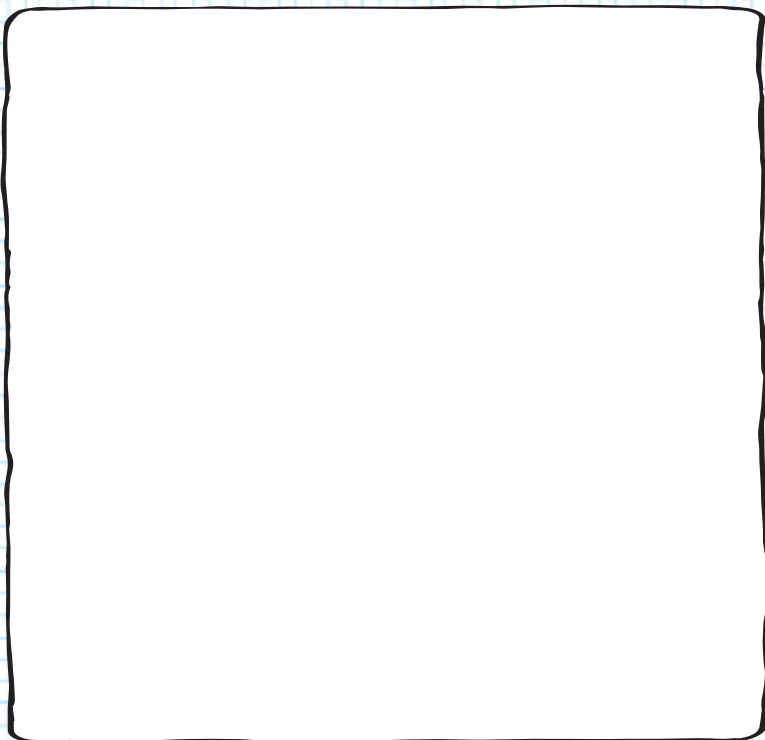
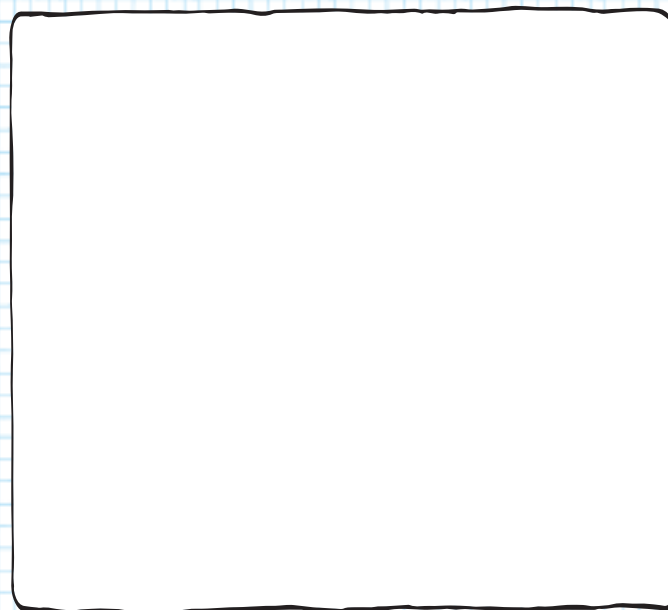
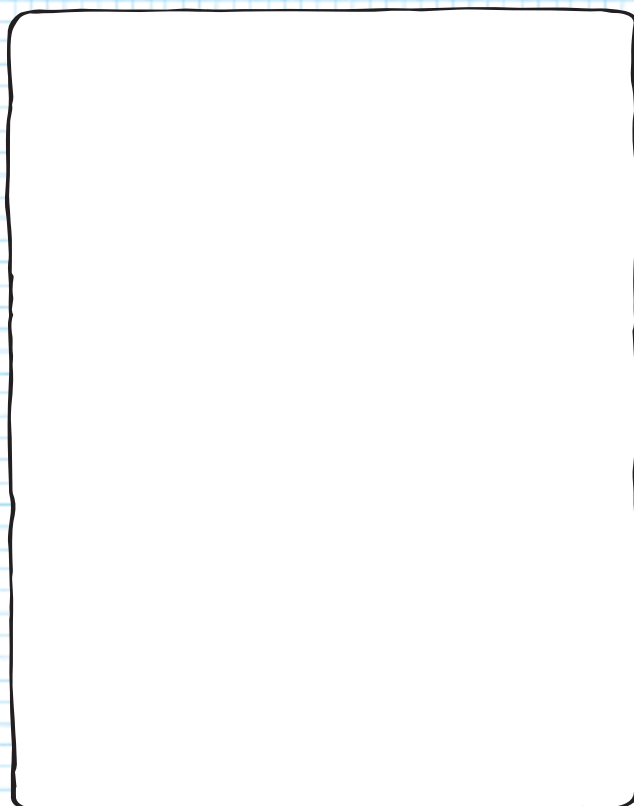
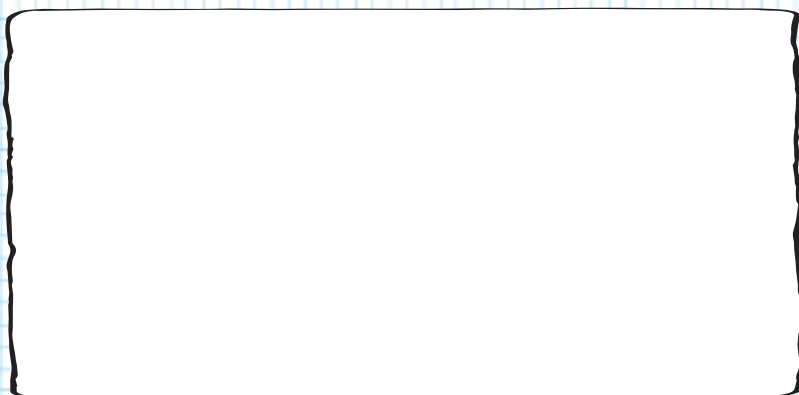
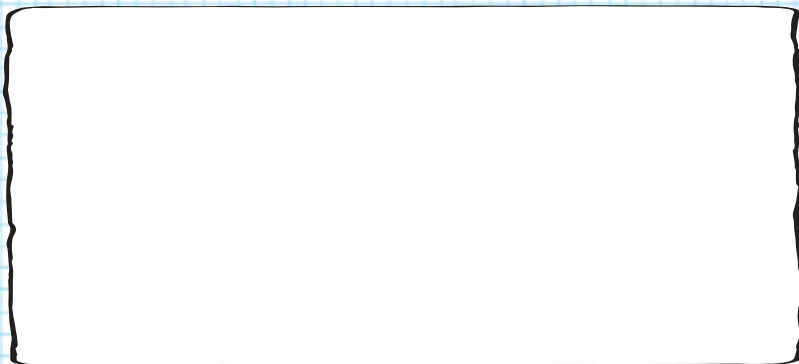


COVER UP THESE WORDS WITH A
COLLAGE THAT SHOWS HOW YOUR
CHARACTER SEES THE WORLD AT
THE START OF THE STORY..

COVER UP THESE WORDS WITH A
COLLAGE THAT SHOWS HOW YOUR
CHARACTER MIGHT SEE THE WORLD
AT THE END OF THE STORY..

FINISH THE PHRASE, "WHEN I WAS ..." WITH A LINE OR TWO FROM
YOUR CHARACTER'S POINT OF VIEW. EXPLORE VARIOUS AGES.





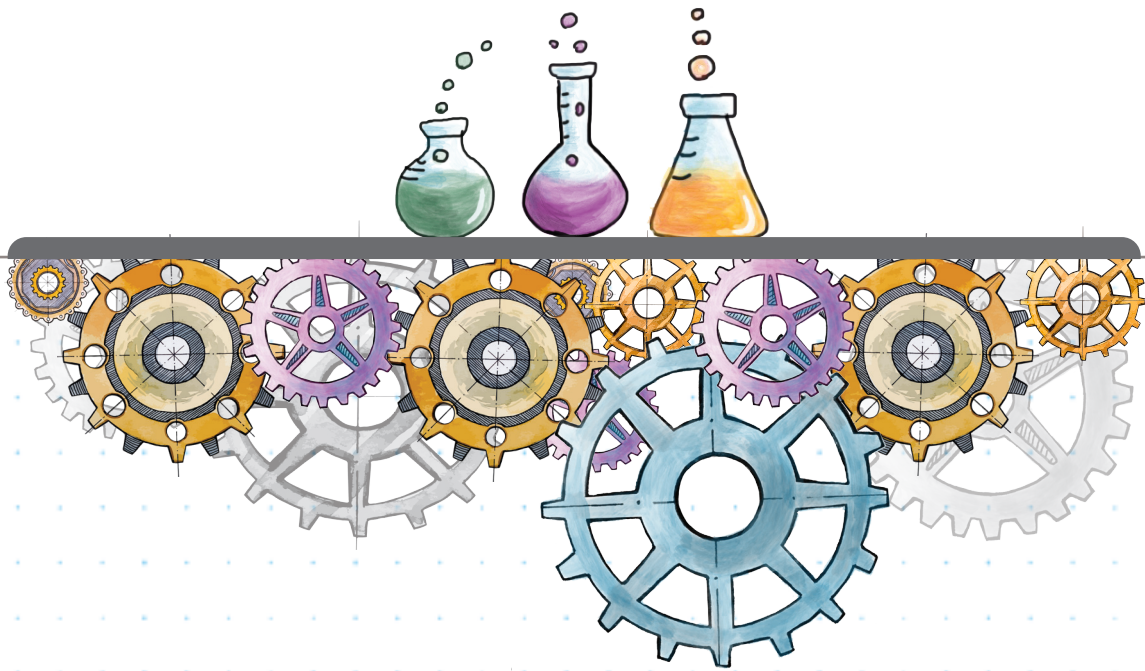
CONFLICT GRAPH

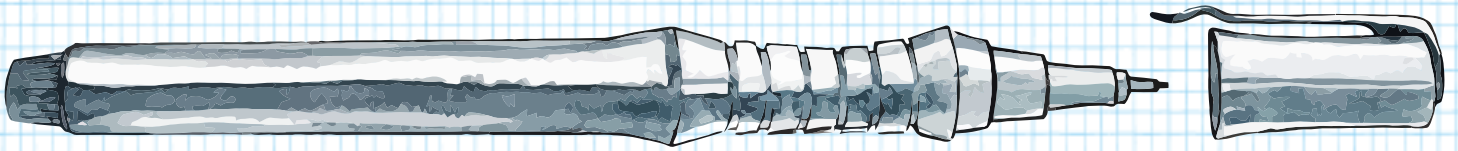
CHARACTER	WANTS	BELIEVES	TRIES TO

NOW, SHADE THE ROWS WITH COLORED PENCIL. USE RED FOR NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR MAIN CHARACTER AND GREEN FOR POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS.

PART THREE:

DESIGNING STORYTELLING STYLE





As you began to experiment with scenes, you may have made a conscious decision to tell the story in first person, with your main character using "I" perspective to tell the story. Or, you may have chosen to tell the story in third person, giving yourself a bit of distance from the main character. Most likely, you wrote in the style that felt most comfortable to you.

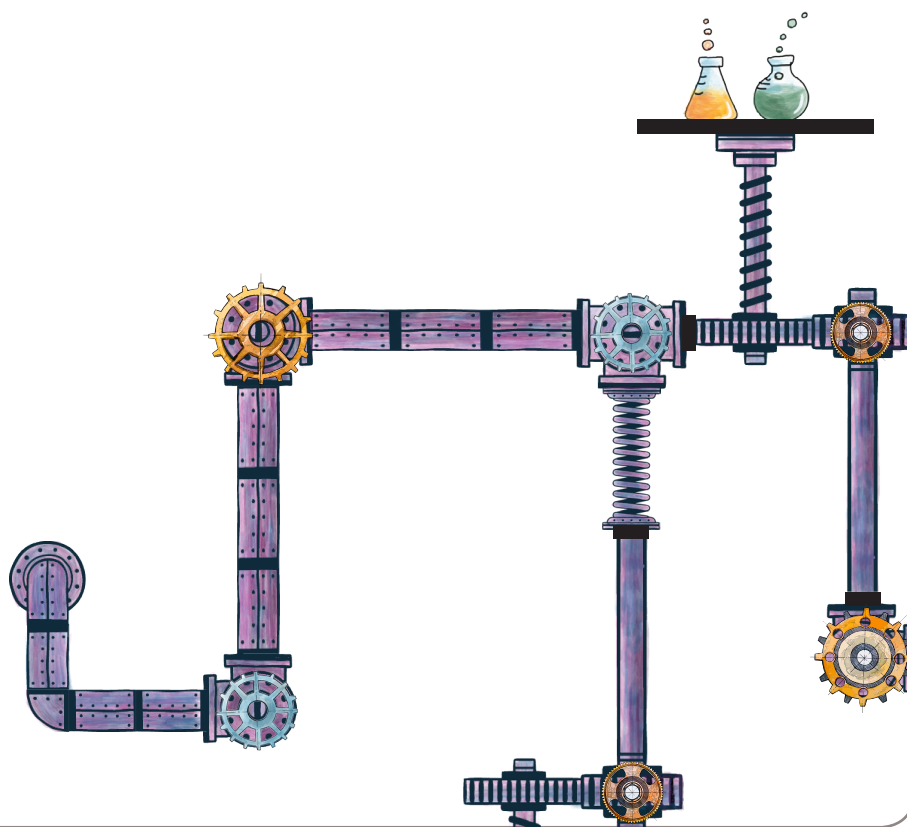
Comfort, while writing a novel, is important. You want to choose a storytelling voice you can maintain through your drafting process. A particular style might feel fun for a few paragraphs, but become distracting as you continue writing. Some voices work better for certain stories than for others. Many writers tell tales of struggling to write a novel, their words refusing to flow. Then, after trying a different point of view, suddenly the draft started pouring out.

It's important to make a conscious decision about your storytelling style. The method with which you tell the story determines many factors: how close your reader feels to your character, how much of the world around your character your reader will see, what information your reader should or should not know, and even the tone and mood of the novel. There isn't one BEST way to tell a story. Still, each method of storytelling brings with it a set of expectations. When you break these expectations, readers are likely to stop reading and say something like, "Wait a minute. How did Emma see that bandit sneaking up on her while she was fast asleep?"

As we explore various points of view, try to keep an open mind. Even if you're relatively sure what storytelling voice you'd like to use for your novel, you may make a character discovery as you try on a different storytelling voice. Even if you don't use that voice, you can always use the personality trait you've found. Also, you may decide to use one or more of the bonus storytelling tools this section outlines, such as journal entries, letters, newspaper articles, etc, which allow for multiple storytelling styles through your novel. As always, allow yourself to experiment. Surprise yourself! Your novel will become more layered and engaging as you play with your options.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPERIMENTING WITH POINT OF VIEW



FIRST PERSON

In first person, the writer slips into the main character's skin. The writer might write, "When I tiptoed into the darkened house, the floorboards creaked and goose bumps prickled across my skin. Light shone from under an upstairs door. Not a good sign."

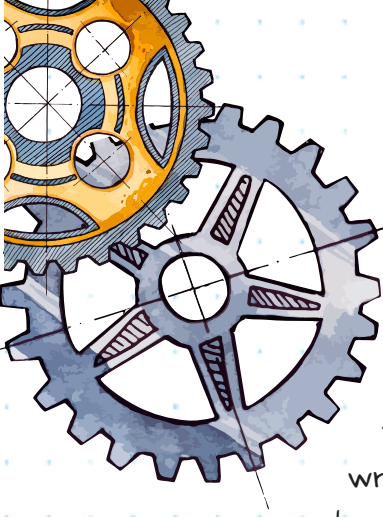
BENEFITS OF FIRST PERSON:

- The reader experiences the story from inside the character's head. The reader experiences the story personally with intimate connection to each moment.
- Emotions are vivid and can be shown through physical sensations.
- The character's voice and opinions are a strong part of the storytelling. Just as we come to know our friends when we have conversations with them, we come to know our characters when they tell us their stories in first person.
- It's easy for your reader to connect with your character, suffer alongside them when they're in pain, and fly high on the thrill of their successes.

DRAWBACKS OF FIRST PERSON:

- Your reader can't know anything your character doesn't know. You shouldn't say things such as "Meanwhile, across town..."
- Your character can't jump inside someone else's mind. For instance, it's confusing if you write, "My best friend, Ashlea, thought I was nuts for confronting Mrs. Hanley." First person narrators interpret other characters' thoughts and emotions through tone of voice and body language.
- Sometimes it's hard to be descriptive and believable, since people don't often describe the furniture and feel of spaces they know well. Also, if your character is in danger, it can be difficult to describe anything other than the panic of outrunning an avalanche.
- You shouldn't use lyrical words your character would never use. The entire book should be written in the character's voice, and the further that voice is from your natural style, the more challenging the writing becomes.





LIMITED THIRD

In limited third person, the writer refers to the character by name, but sticks to the main character's perspective. Readers have access to the main character's thoughts and sensory experience. The writer might write, "When Emily tiptoed into the darkened house, the floorboards creaked and goose bumps spiderwebbed across her skin. Light shone from under an upstairs door. She froze and thought, *Not a good sign.*"

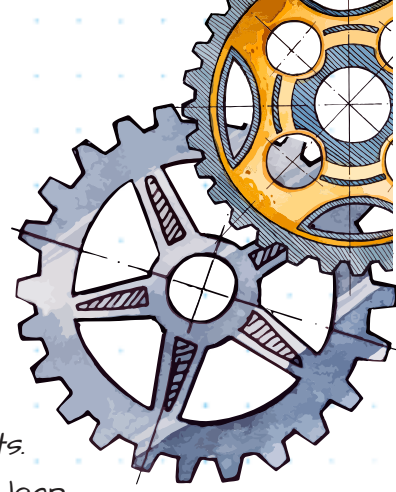
BENEFITS OF LIMITED THIRD PERSON:

- As with first person, the reader experiences the story in close connection to the character. Readers don't know more than the limited third person narrator knows.
- Emotions can still be shown through physical sensation, but with the slight distance of limited third, you can use words the character might not use in the moment, such as "spiderwebbed." Limited third person allows you room for a little more flair.
- The outside narrator also allows the writer more room to describe setting or mood details the main character might not notice.
- As with first person, in limited third person, it is easy for your reader to connect, suffer, and celebrate with your character.

DRAWBACKS OF LIMITED THIRD PERSON:

- Your reader still shouldn't know things your character doesn't know. You build suspense and connection between the character and reader by keeping your readers in the dark whenever your character is in the dark.
- As with first person, your narrator shouldn't jump inside someone else's mind. Leaping from limited third into another character's thoughts is disorienting to the reader.
- When sharing your character's thoughts in their own words, use italics. Otherwise, paraphrase as part of the narration, for instance, "The light couldn't be a good sign."

OMNISCIENT THIRD



Omniscient third person makes the reader aware of the novel's narrator. Sometimes, this narrator is a quirky character who interjects commentary, as Lemony Snicket does in the *Series of Unfortunate Events*. The omniscient narrator knows everyone's thoughts and feelings, and can leap from location to location at will. The writer might write, "Emily would never have entered the house, had she known what awaited her. As she tiptoed into the front hallway, the floorboards creaked and goose bumps spiderwebbed across her skin. While she eyed the eerie light under the upstairs door, the hairy beast in the bedroom licked his lips. Yum, he thought. Dinnertime."

BENEFITS OF OMNISCIENT THIRD PERSON

- The narrator can offer perspective that your main character doesn't know. The narrator can tell readers what's happening elsewhere, reasons your character is behaving badly, or foreshadow to build tension.
- The narrator often adds humor to the story, and adds an engaging voice to the story. Often, an omniscient narrator will speak to "you," the reader.
- As in limited third, the omniscient narrator can describe setting or mood details that the character might not notice in the moment.
- Instead of connecting with just one character in the novel, the reader has a bird's eye view.

DRAWBACKS OF OMNISCIENT THIRD PERSON

- Sometimes readers feel ambivalent about stories if they don't identify strongly with a specific character.
- There is distance between the reader and the moment-to-moment action, so they might not feel the emotion, suspense and excitement as vividly.

[illegible]

[illegible]

FINALLY, EXPERIMENT WITH AN OMNISCIENT NARRATOR..

[illegible]

REFLECT ON YOUR VARIATIONS.
WHAT WORKED? WHAT DIDN'T?

I LIKED:

I DIDN'T LIKE:

I COULD TRY:

OR I COULD TRY:

STYLE OPTIONS

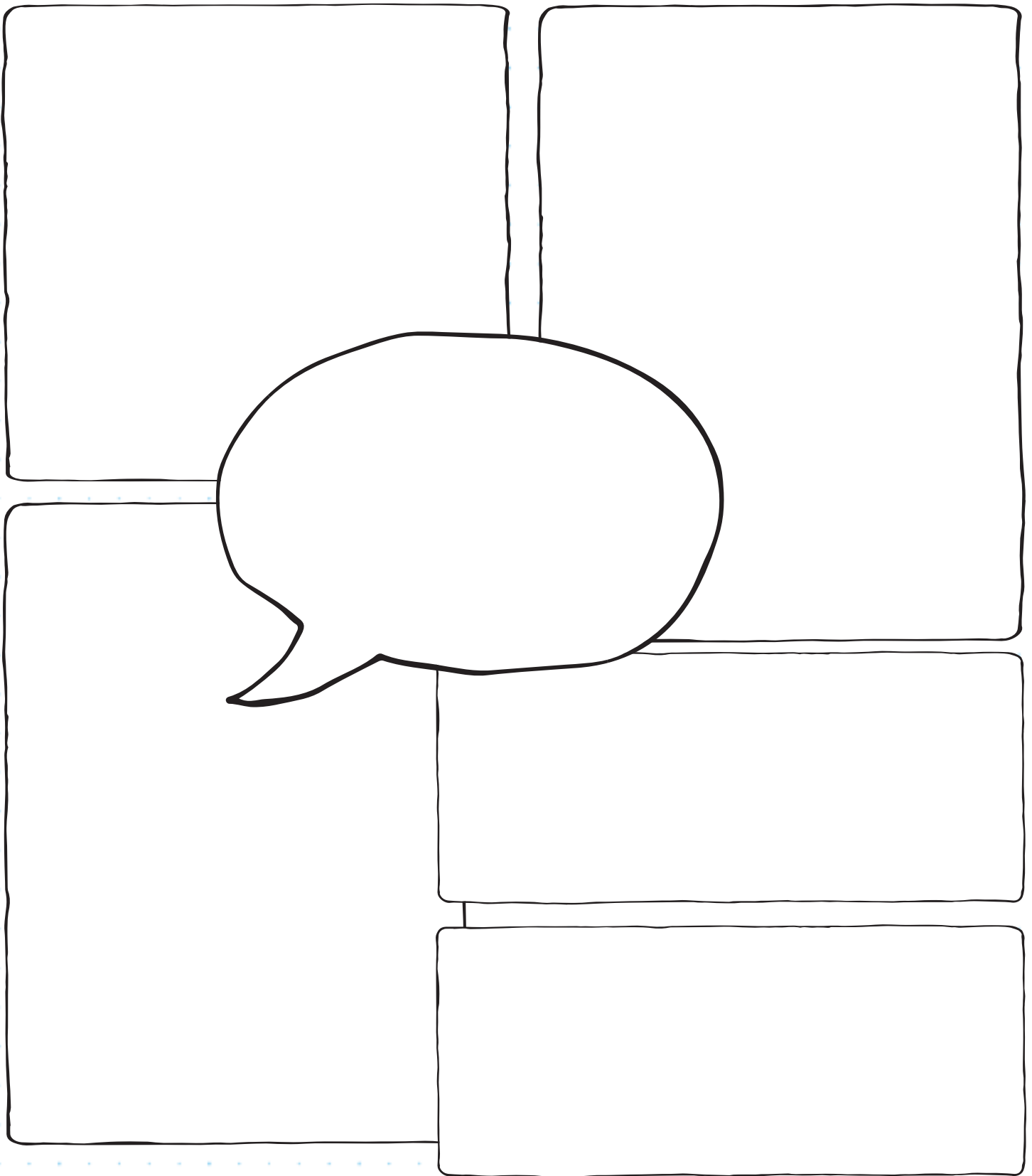
You may have discovered that you like more than one storytelling style. Or, maybe you aren't sure which character should be the narrator. As you consider options, here are some possibilities to consider.

MULTIPLE NARRATORS: In first and limited third person points of view, you might choose to use more than one narrator. Two alternating viewpoints, for instance, allows your reader to hear two different perspectives.. Strong examples of multiple narrators include *Flipped* by Wendelen VanDraanen or *The Chronus Chronicles* by Anne Ursu. Be careful, though. The more narrators you use, the more diluted your reader's connection with any one character. A more rare option is to use first person point of view for one narrator and limited third person for another narrator. *Zel* by Donna Jo Napoli pulls off this challenging technique well.

JOURNAL ENTRIES: One way to slip a little first person narration into a limited third or omniscient novel is to scatter journal entries through the book. Journal entries tend to be casual, based in emotion and reflective in tone. Some stories are written entirely in journal entries, though this can be a difficult voice to maintain through an entire book. One book narrated entirely in journal entries is *The Book of a Thousand Days* by Shannon Hale.

LETTERS: Letters can add tone, humor or important information to your plot. Your character might regularly correspond with one person, or you may include letters from various people throughout the novel, to provide information in a variety of voices. Letters can offer clues, or provide an entire subplot. *A Northern Light* by Jennifer Donnelly uses a series of letters as an important subplot. The *Harry Potter* series uses letters for various purposes, including comedic relief and providing key clues.

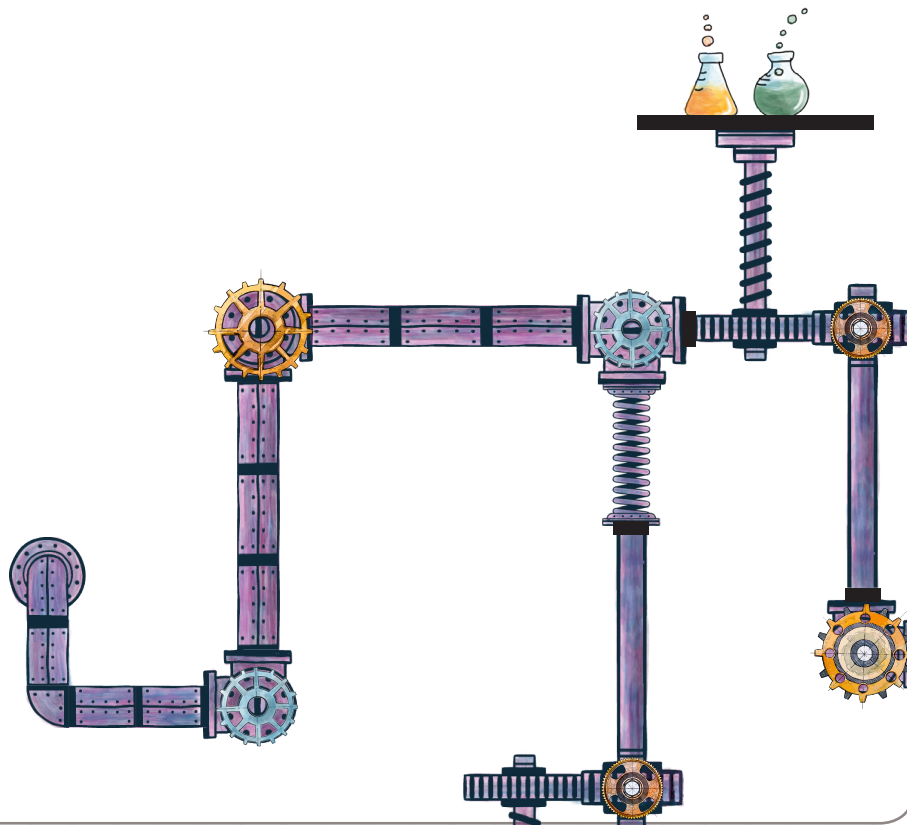
INFORMATIONAL ARTICLES: One way to insert outside information in a concise way is to include newspaper or online articles. Consider all the ways we gather information every day. All of these methods add variety, texture, and reality to your novel.

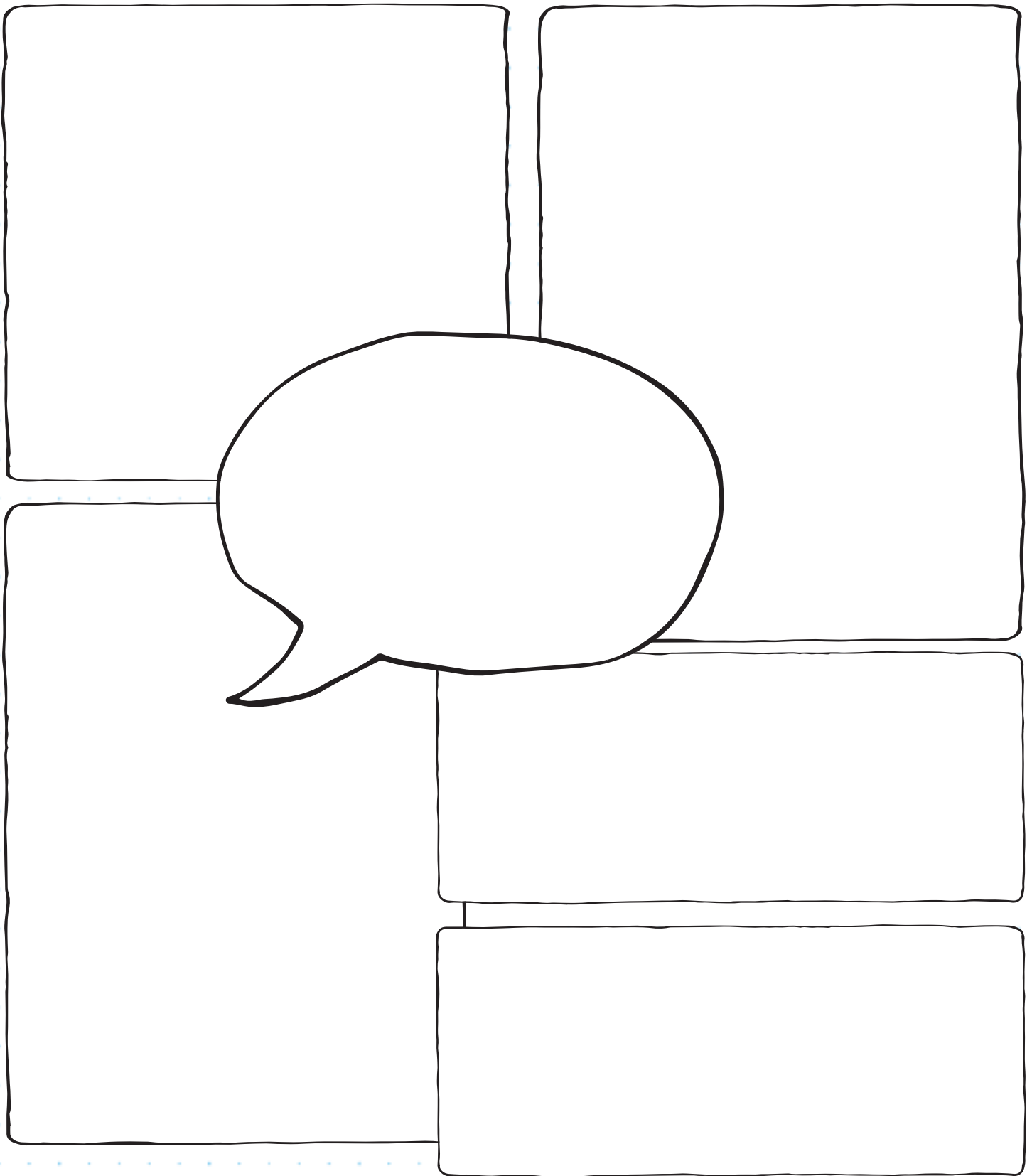


PAY ATTENTION TO THE CONVERSATIONS AROUND YOU. WHAT PHRASES AND FIGURATIVE SPEECH CATCH YOUR EAR?

CHAPTER EIGHT

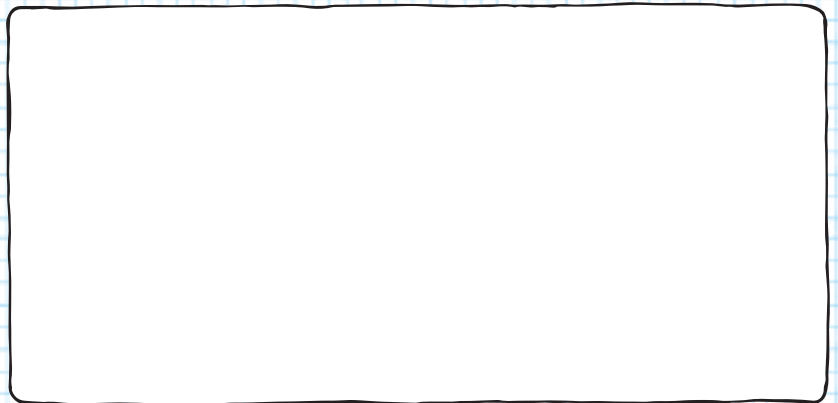
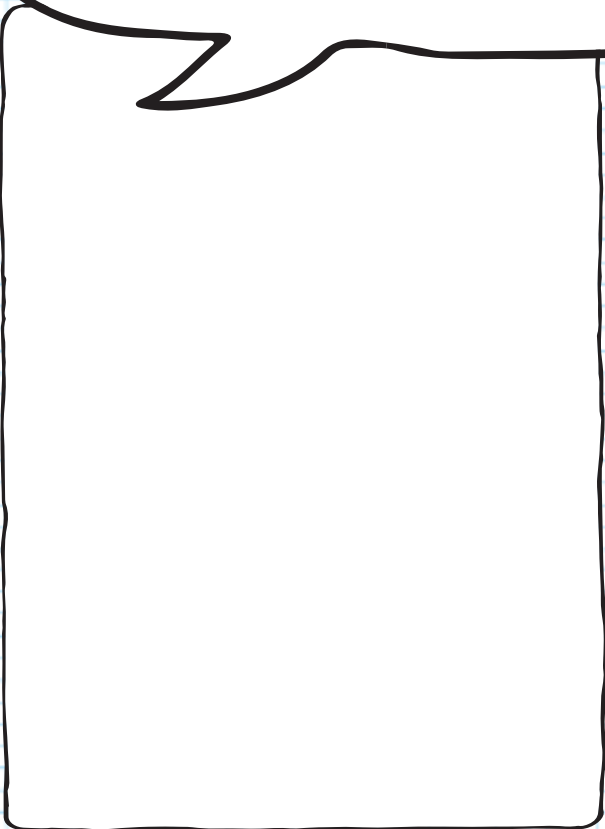
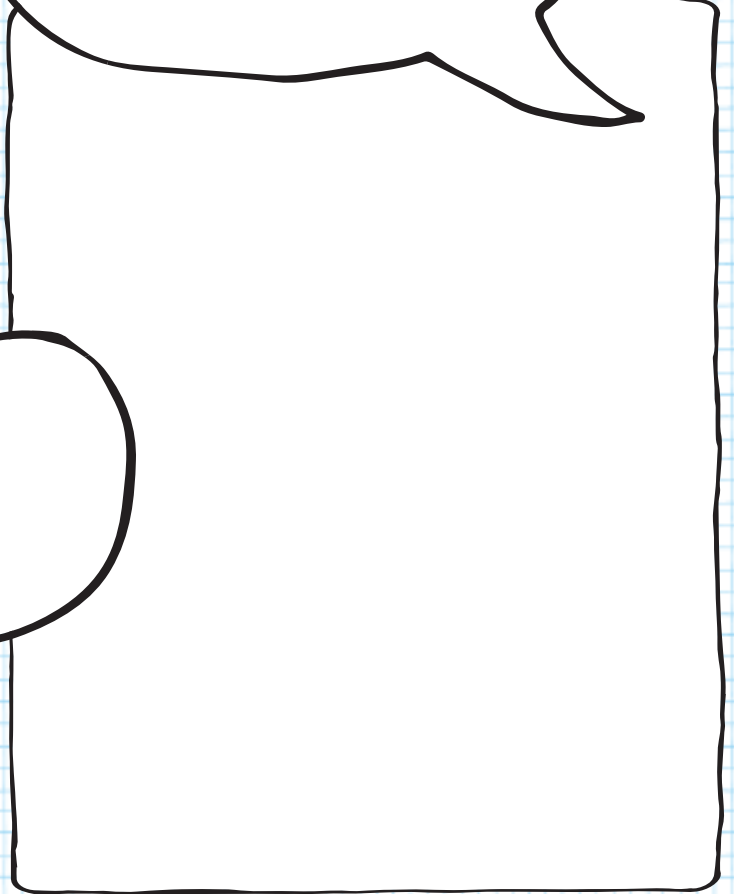
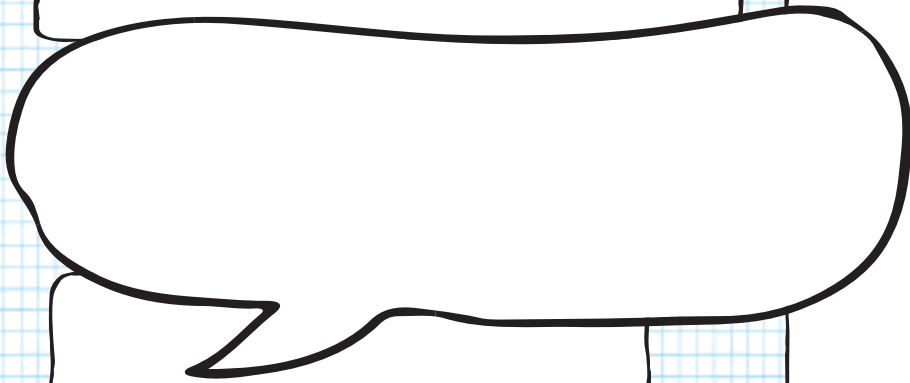
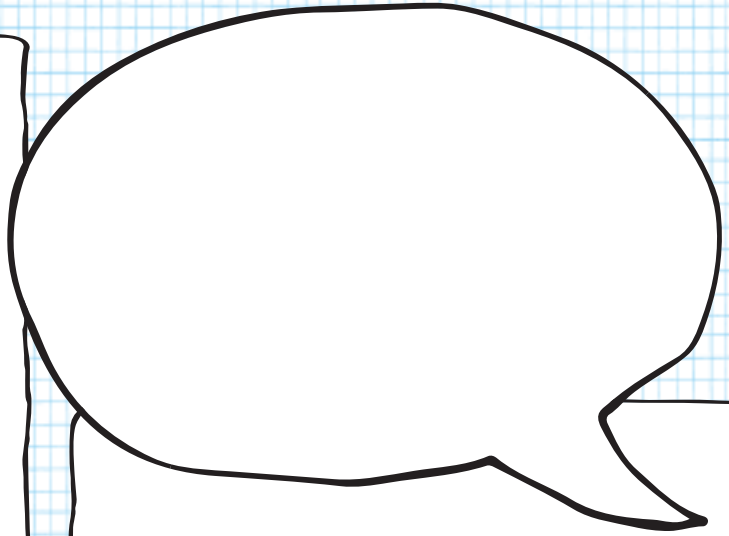
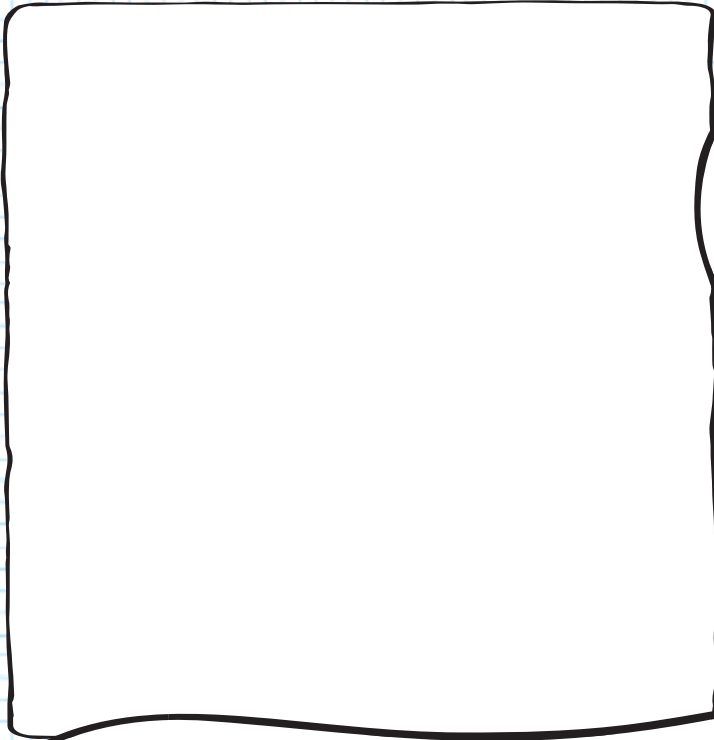
EXPERIMENTING WITH DIALOGUE





PHRASES FOR: _____

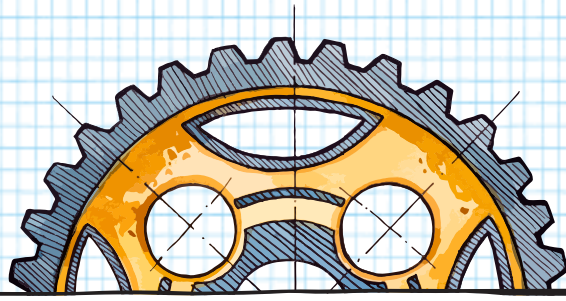
PHRASES FOR: _____



PHRASES FOR: _____

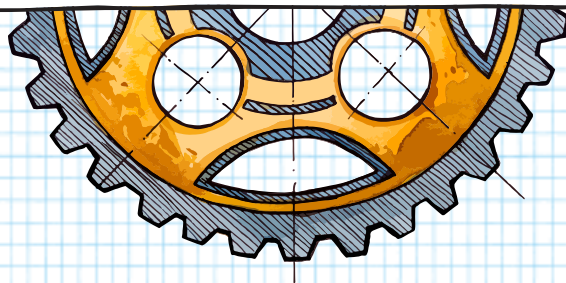
A hand-drawn comic strip template on a blue dotted background. The template consists of five rectangular panels arranged in a 2x2 grid with a fifth panel centered below the top two. A large, irregular speech bubble is positioned in the center, overlapping the four panels that surround it. The panels and the speech bubble are outlined with simple black lines.

GESTURE & ACTION IDEAS



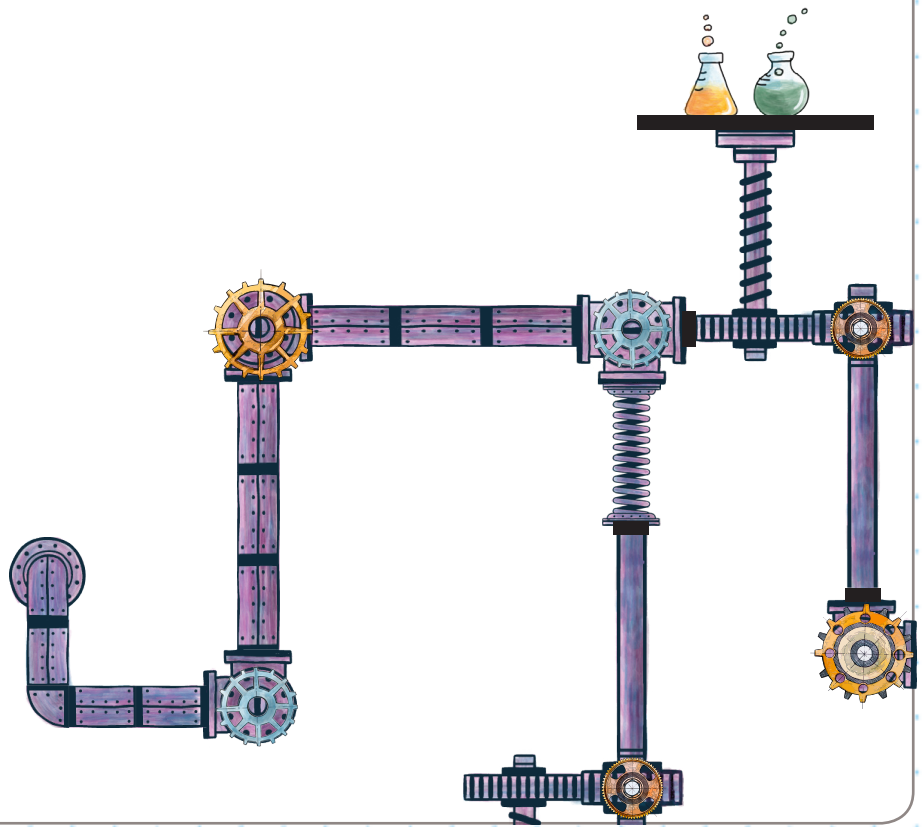
DIALOGUE TRICKS

- USE ACTION TO SHOW TONE AND SUBTEXT.
- EXPERIMENT WITH SECRETS AND HALF-TRUTHS.
- USE SILENCE AS A REPLY.
- ANSWER A QUESTION WITH A QUESTION.
- LET CHARACTERS INTERRUPT ONE ANOTHER.
- GIVE CHARACTERS CATCHPHRASES.
- USE VARIOUS TACTICS OF PERSUASION.
- ASK: SHOULD THEY LISTEN TO ONE ANOTHER?



CHAPTER NINE

EXPERIMENTING WITH SCENES



WRITE A SUMMARY OF THE SCENE.

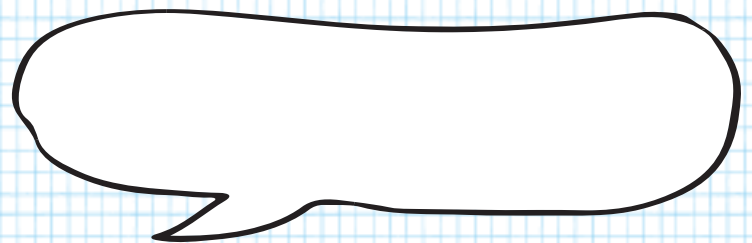
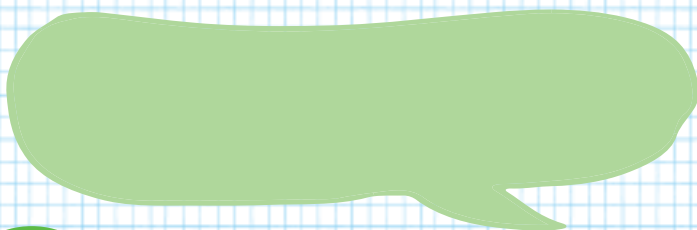
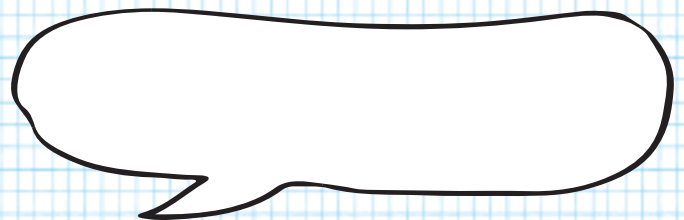
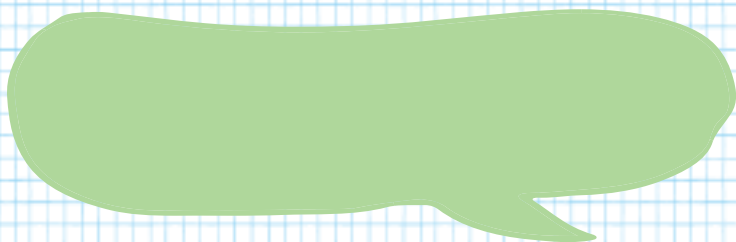
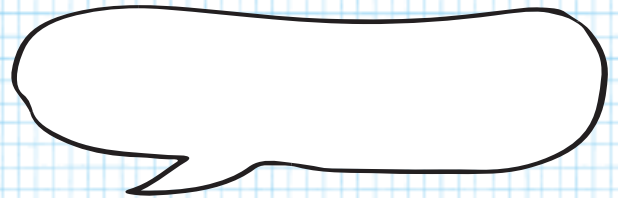
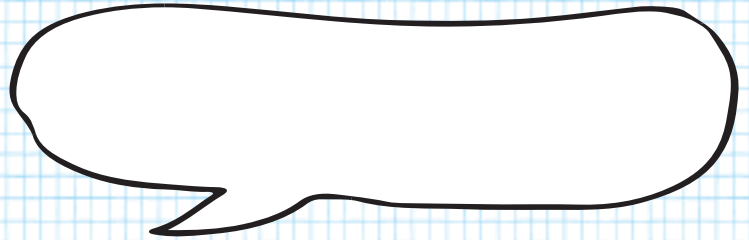
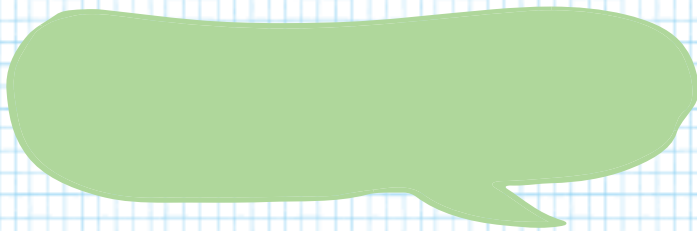
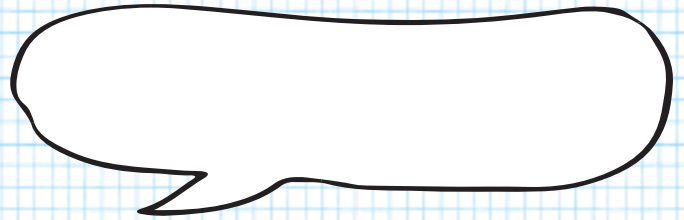
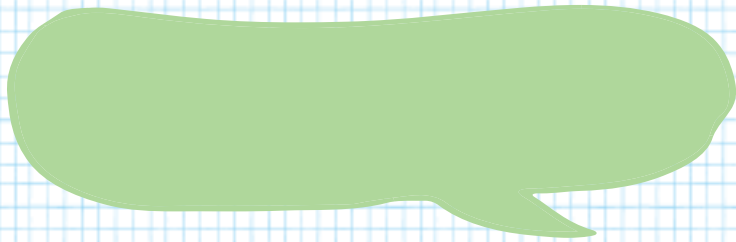
NOW, TRY THE SAME SCENE IN FULL ACTION.

WRITE IT AFTER THE FACT, IN A PHONE CALL SCRIPT.

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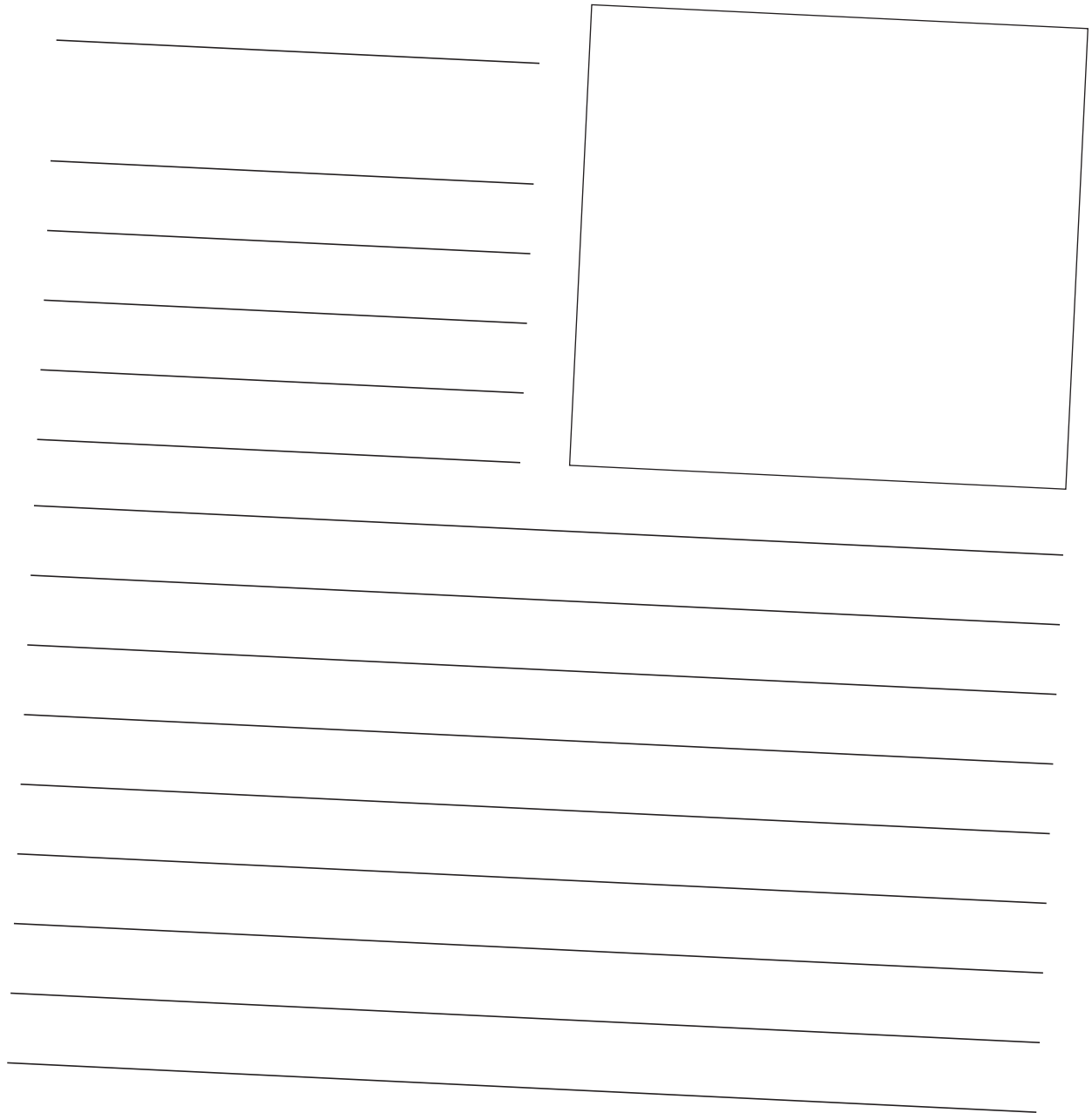
TELL WHAT HAPPENED IN A LETTER..

TELL IT AS IT'S HAPPENING, IN TEXT MESSAGES.



WRITE IT UP AS A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE.

the Weekly Herald

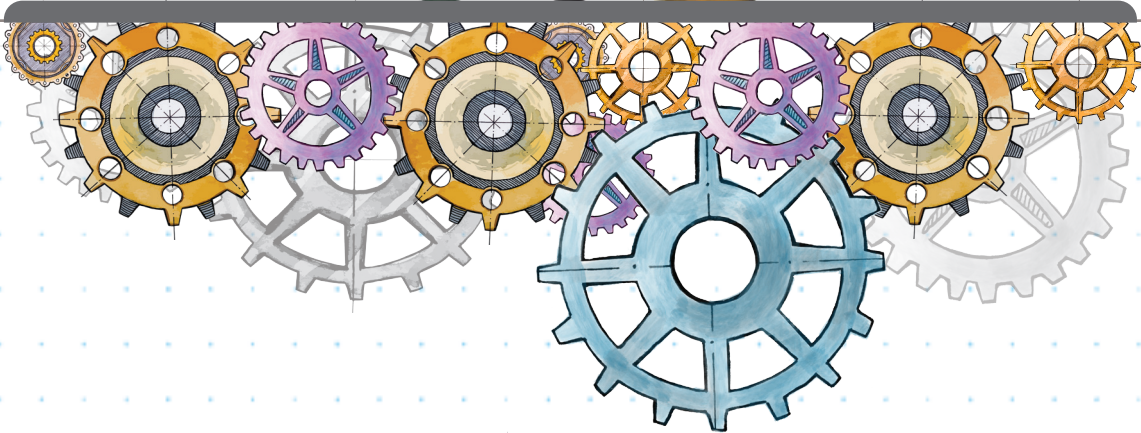


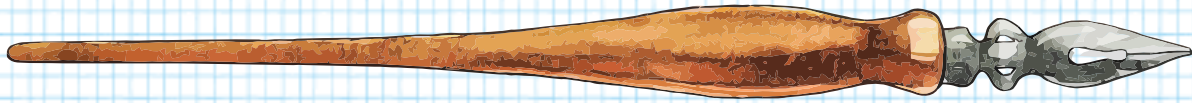
The template consists of a large rectangular box on the right side, intended for a photograph or illustration. To the left of this box, there are seven horizontal lines for writing. Below the box, there are ten more horizontal lines for writing, providing a total of 17 lines for the article text.

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PART FOUR:

BUILDING THE WORLD OF THE STORY





Building a world for your novel involves making thousands of decisions. Each choice you make will create limitations and possibilities for your character. No matter what genre you're writing, the setting, or the world in which you place the story, determines much of what might happen in the plot. Of course, this is easy to see in books such as the *Chronicles of Narnia*, where the magical world sets the adventure in motion. But consider how an orphan story might play out when set in a historical old-west town as opposed to in a futuristic moon-city.

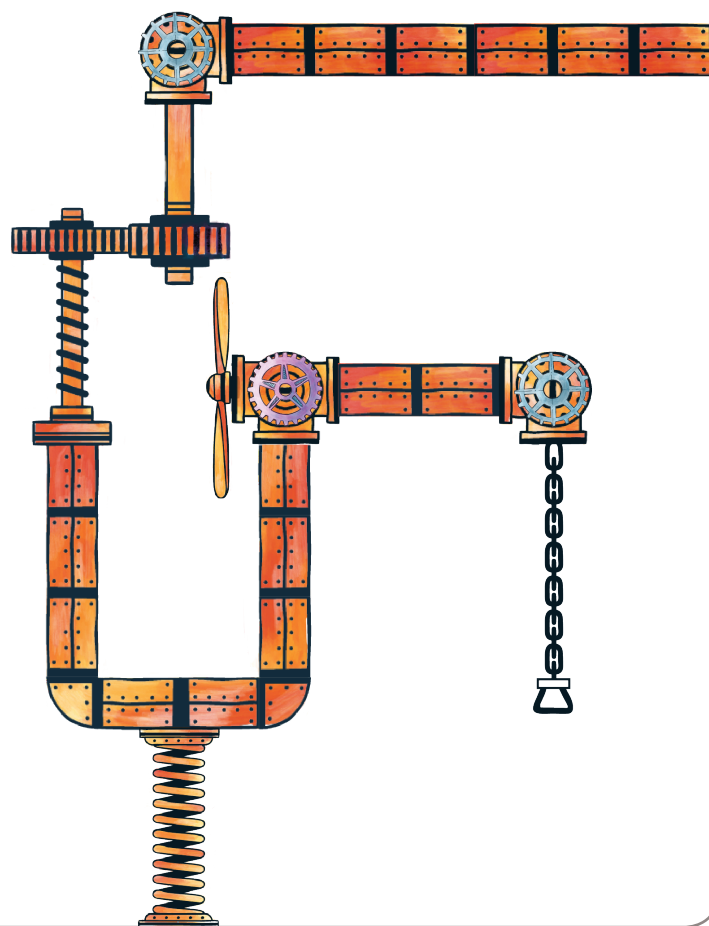
Setting also provides possibilities for humor, originality and richness in your novel. Have you ever lost yourself in a book, feeling as though you tumbled out of real life and into the world of the story? You see through the character's eyes, experiencing sounds, smells and tastes along with them. How do authors whisk us away into their novels this way? The secret is in the details, and the details begin with world-building.

The first step in world-building is to decide how your story's world works. What kind of house does your character live in? Is their home similar or different than the other houses in this world? Do kids in this society go to school? If not, what takes up most of their time? Is eating as simple as opening the refrigerator or visiting a restaurant? Does your character have to milk their own cow? What laws exist in this world? Is your character's life filled with rules, or are they free to do as they like? Do people work?

Once you know the details, you can pepper them through your novel. However, when you're writing, you won't want to stop to describe setting. Instead, choose the most important details to include that give the reader a sense of place, time, and how the character feels about the setting. In a cave, show the feeling of the cold, damp air, and the feel of the ominous darkness. In a desert, show the heat radiating off the sand, and how much your character wants water. Tuck essential details into your story's action and you, too, can whisk a reader into the world of your novel.

CHAPTER TEN

MAPPING THE WORLD



ENVIRONMENT

WEATHER, PLANTS &
GEOGRAPHY:

COMMON BUILDINGS:

TRANSPORTATION:

TECHNOLOGY OR TOOLS:

LOCATION BRAINSTORM

OFFICIAL PLACES:

EVERYDAY PLACES:

FUN PLACES:

DANGEROUS PLACES:

POSSIBLE CONFLICTS IN MY WORLD

VS.

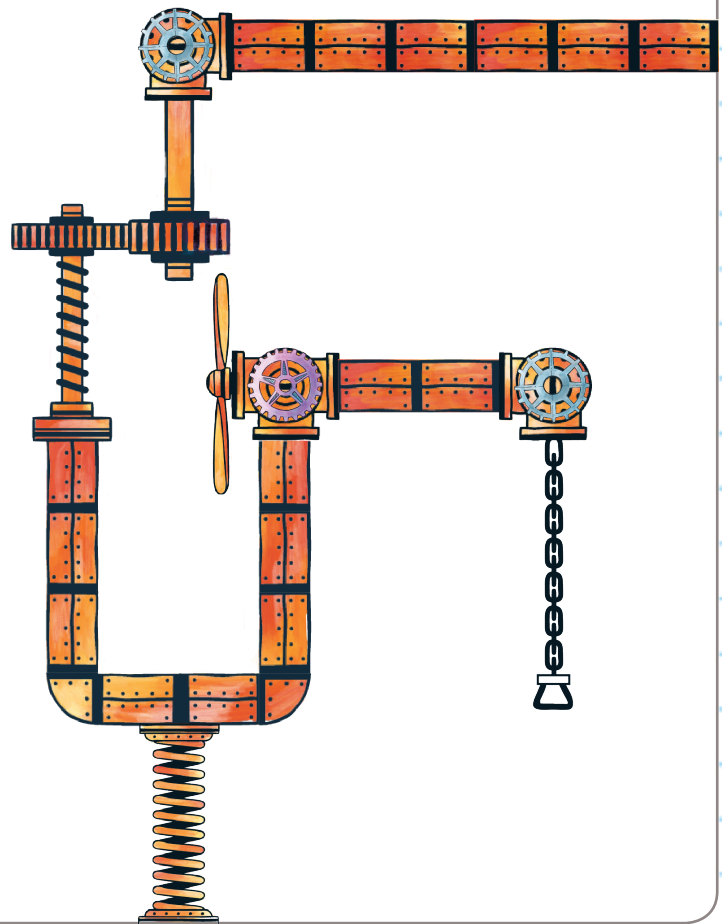
VS.

VS.

VS.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EXPLORING CULTURE & CONFLICT



AT HOME

MEALS & TREATS:

CLOTHING:

ACTIVITIES:

DISAGREEMENTS:

AT SCHOOL OR WORK

SKILLS LEARNED:

RULES:

WAYS TO EXCEL:

DISAGREEMENTS:

IN THE COMMUNITY

NEWSWORTHY TOPICS:

ENTERTAINMENT:

STATUS SYMBOLS:

PROBLEMS:

IN THE GOVERNMENT

WHO'S IN CHARGE:

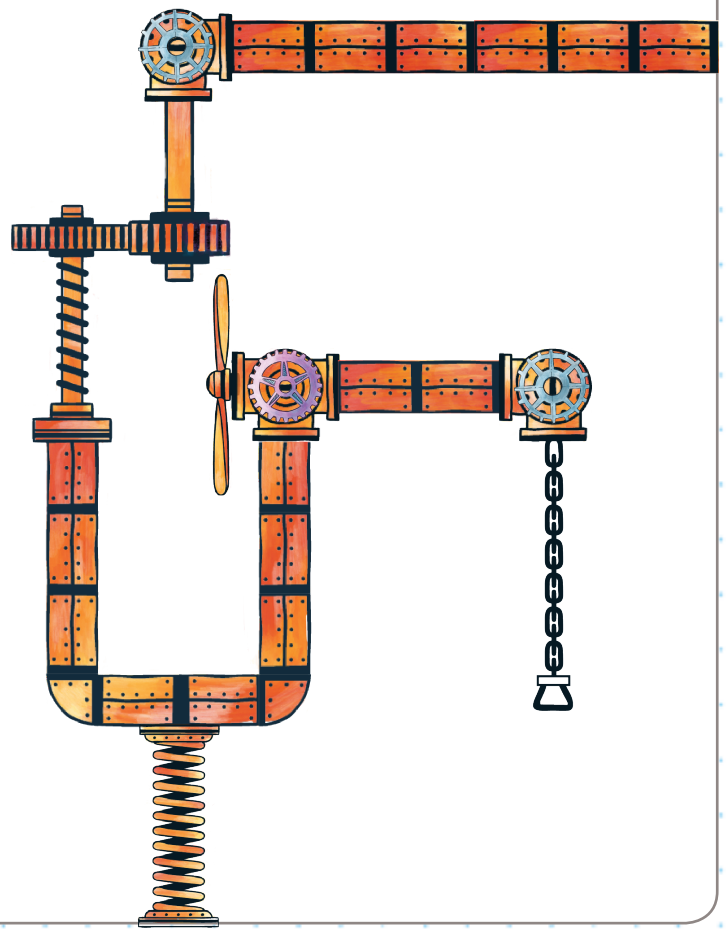
LAWS:

PUNISHMENTS:

REWARDS:

CHAPTER TWELVE

DETAILING SCENES



DETAIL A SETTING

HEAR:

SEE:

SMELL:

FEEL:

TASTE:

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?

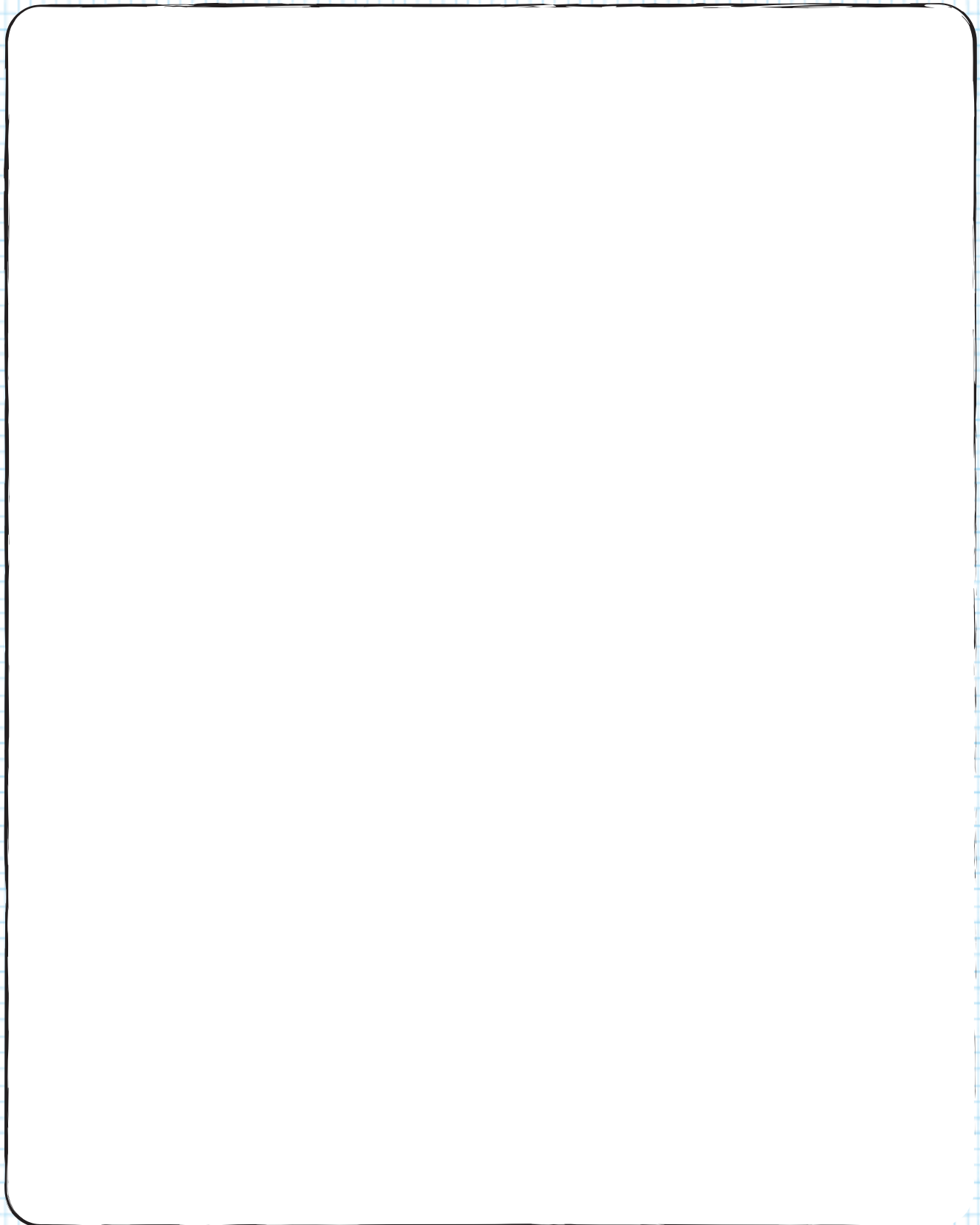
DETAILS THAT DEFINE
THE PLACE:

DETAILS THAT SHOW THE TIME:

DETAILS THAT SET
THE TONE:

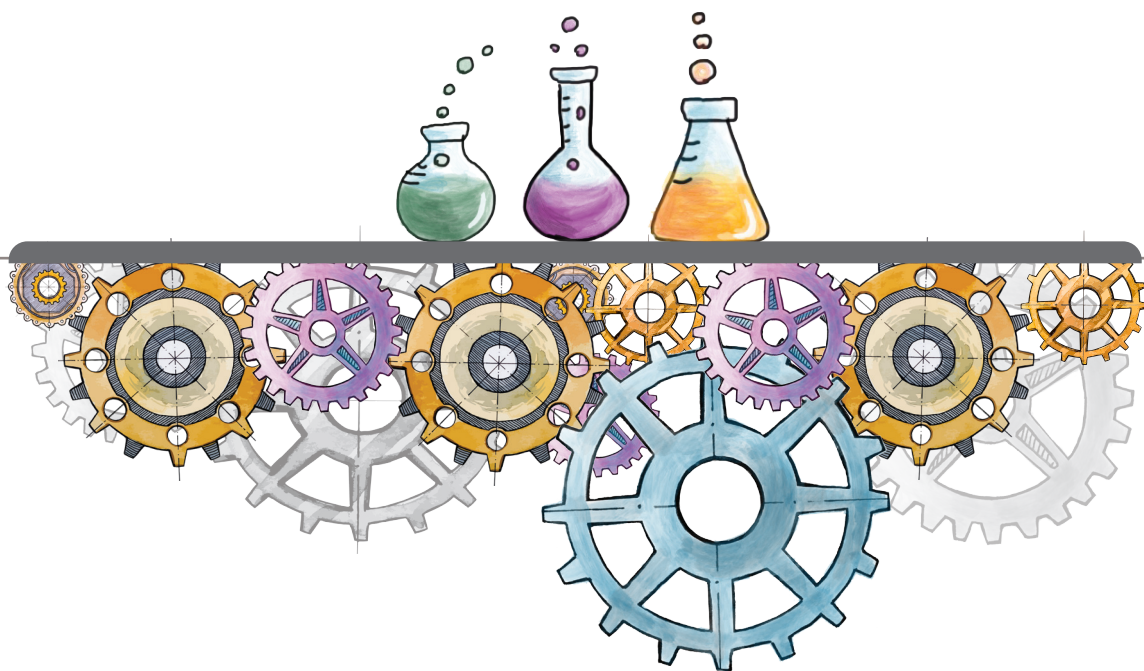
IMPORTANT PROPS FOR
THE SCENE ACTION:

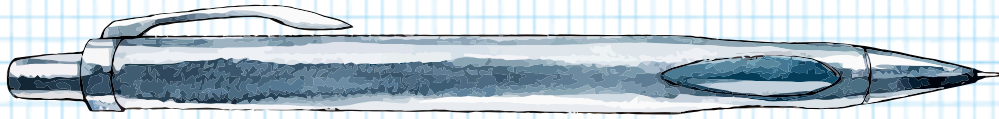
DRAW A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF A SETTING
SO YOU CAN STAGE THE ACTION.



PART FIVE:

STRUCTURING PLOT





Writers often resist planning their stories. Maybe this resistance is because even though we're writing the story, we're also our story's first reader. We want to maintain the mystery, surprise, and joy of discovery. Many writers fear that too much planning will cause their writing energy to dry up altogether.

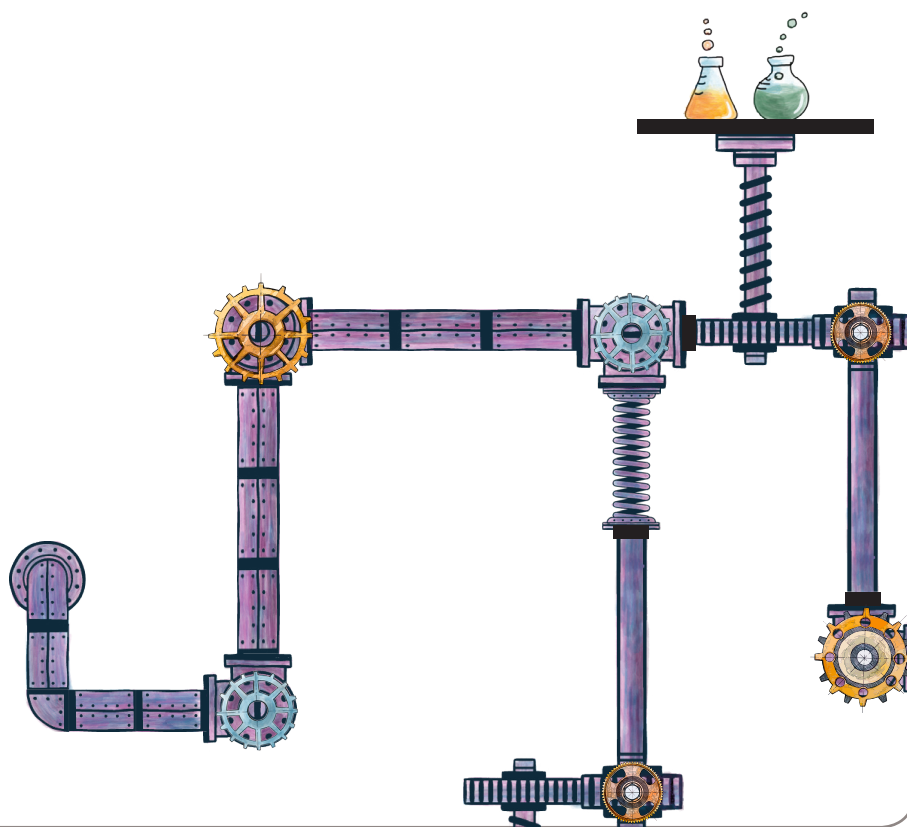
This fear isn't unfounded. Remaining open to surprise is an essential ingredient for creativity. However, if we're honest with ourselves, when we write a story we must know the general direction we're headed. Many writers know the location, characters and conflict of the last scene, even if they don't know the outcome of that scene. Also, we generally have a running list of possible scenes or events floating around in our minds. These uncaptured ideas can distract us from focusing on the scene at hand. Often, our lack of an overall plan creates background noise that also distracts us.

Here's the truth: We need a plan that's structured enough to keep us on track, with enough flexibility to allow for surprise. Every writer approaches this plan in their own way. Some plan the entire story before they start writing, and others write the story to see what happens. However, at some point in the process, writers who are serious about finishing a novel examine the plot. Imagine yourself lost in a corn maze. If you could climb into a hot air balloon and see the general path, you'd do it, right? Plotting gives you that big picture view of your novel. Often, examining the story from above will keep you from getting lost, and ultimately, save you tons of time.

And remember, making a plan doesn't mean you have to be locked into it. Sometimes the detours are the most interesting parts of the road! Let's take a look at how the Hero's Journey can help you structure a loose, workable skeleton for your novel.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PLANNING A HERO'S JOURNEY



THE HERO'S JOURNEY

ORDINARY LIFE:

Show who your character is before everything starts. What are their strengths and weaknesses? What do they want most?

1.

THE INVITATION:

Your character is given the opportunity to go on a quest or journey. They may jump on the chance or hesitate.

2.

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD:

In this moment, your character takes action which catapults them into the story. There's no going back.

3.

MEETING A WISE ADVISOR:

Your character meets someone who helps them define and prepare for their quest.

4.

TRIAL ONE:

The first crisis your character faces. This is often the climax of an initial collection of difficulties.

5.

TRIAL TWO:

The second crisis, smack dab in the middle of the story, pushing us forward..

6.

TRIAL THREE:

The third crisis, which usually leads straight into the climax..

7.

WRESTLING THE DRAGON:

The climax of the story. Bring as many elements of the story together in this moment as possible. The climax of the plot's action often comes just before the emotional climax.

8.

THE "BOON:"

In the climax, your character gains something to bring back home. A boon can be tangible or intangible.

9.

THE JOURNEY HOME:

Often the journey home from a quest involves danger that requires the character to test their newfound skills.

10.

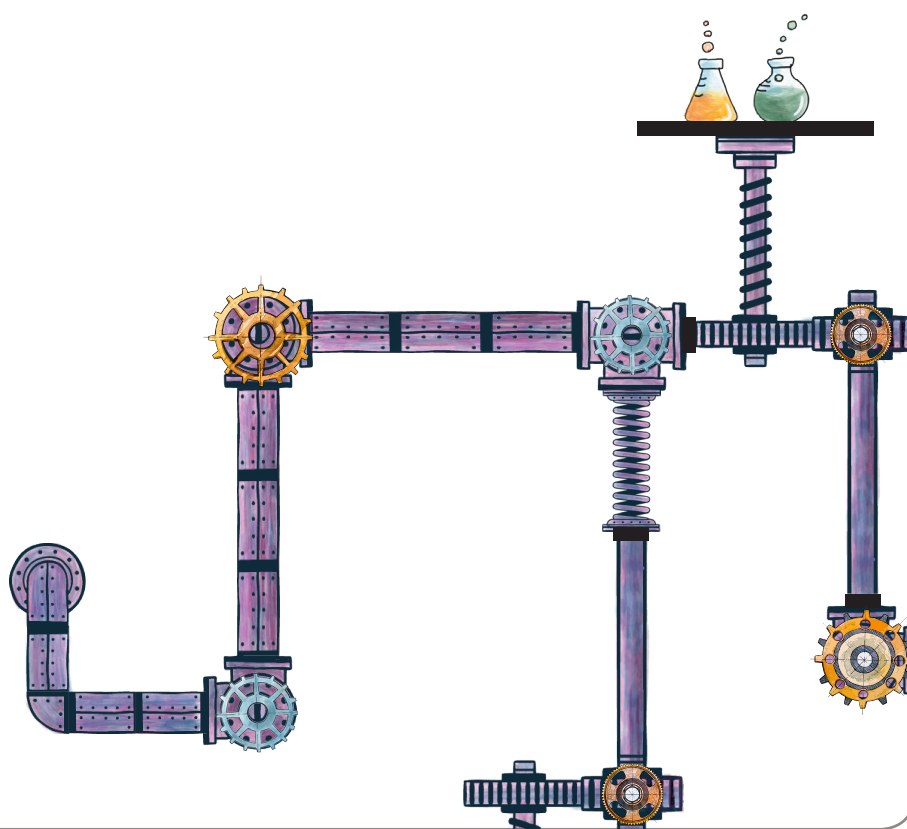
HOME AGAIN:

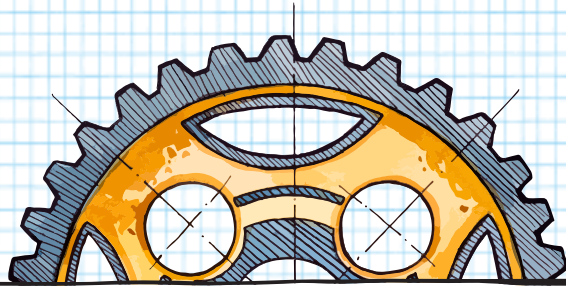
Show who your character is now, after the journey is done.

11.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

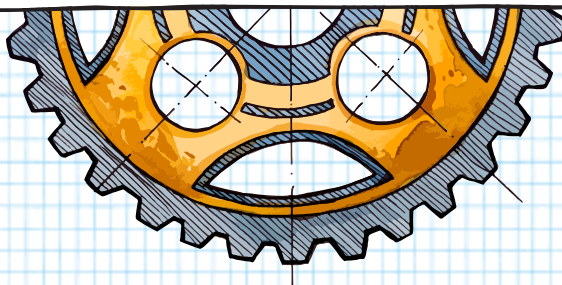
BRAINSTORMING SCENES





QUESTIONS TO SPARK SCENES

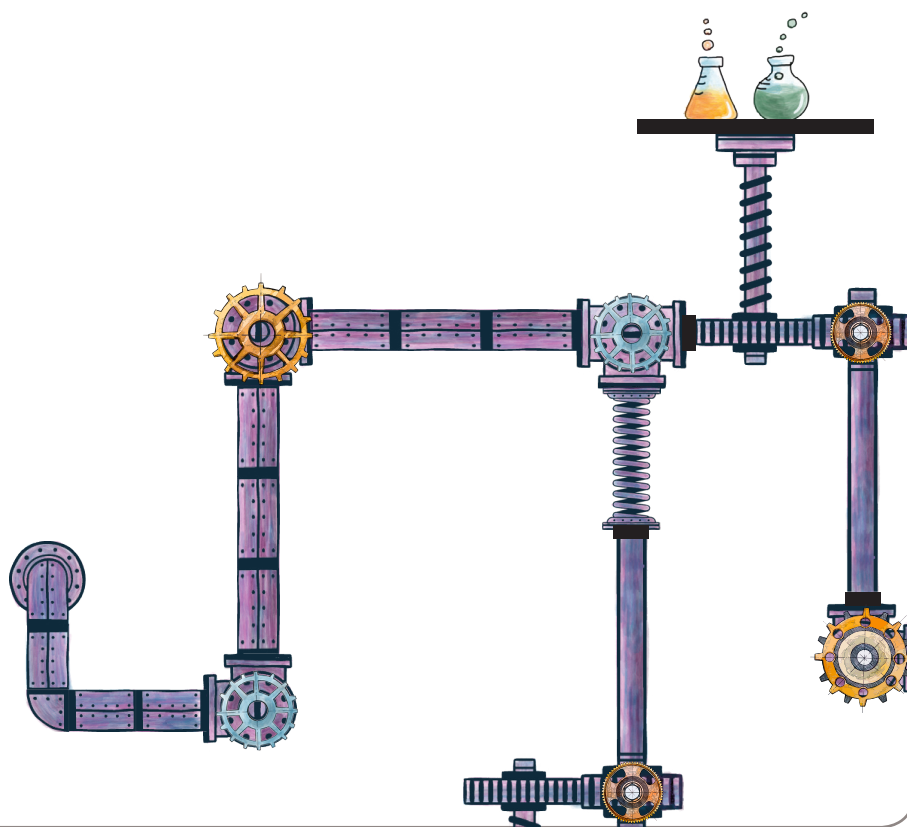
- WHOSE ACTIONS CAUSE TROUBLE FOR THE MC? HOW DOES THAT TROUBLE SHOW UP?
- WHAT'S THE WORST DECISION YOUR MC CAN MAKE?
- WHEN DOES YOUR MC HIT ROCK BOTTOM?
- WHOSE ACTIONS HELP THE MC? HOW DOES THAT HELP SHOW UP?
- HOW DOES YOUR MC USE THEIR NEW SKILLS AS THEY SHOW UP?
- WHO DOES YOUR MC FAIL? HOW DOES THAT HAPPEN?
- WHO DOES YOUR MC HELP? HOW DOES THAT HAPPEN?



COLLECT YOUR QUESTIONS HERE TO TACKLE IN OUR PLOT
PROBLEM-SOLVING SESSION.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

PROBLEM-SOLVING YOUR PLOT



COMMON PLOT PROBLEMS

PROBLEM:

The plot lags or doesn't have energy.

SOLUTION:

Add conflict. Consider how other characters, external circumstances, or internal expectations might heighten the tension.

PROBLEM:

The main character is indifferent to the problem.

SOLUTION:

Raise the stakes. Ask yourself: What might the character lose if they don't work this out? If the answer isn't important enough, rework the problem or the consequences.

COMMON PLOT PROBLEMS

PROBLEM:

Too much action, too little emotion.

SOLUTION:

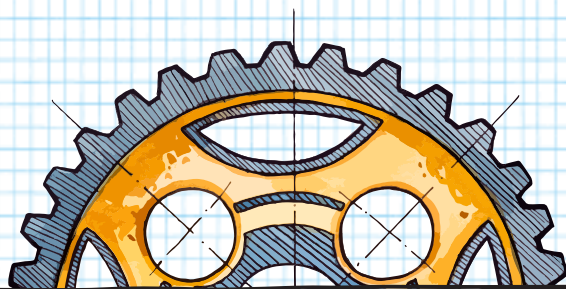
Add interior monologue. Use tiny bursts of thought during action sequences, or find a way to isolate your character in relative safety so they can catch their breath and take stock of how they're doing.

PROBLEM:

Readers keep telling you they're confused.

SOLUTION:

Make a question map. How many unanswered questions have you introduced at once? Is there any way to simplify? Can you explain what your character needs to do in two sentences or less? If not, brainstorm ways to cut complexity.



COMMON PLOT PROBLEMS

PROBLEM:

It feels too much like someone else's book.

SOLUTION:

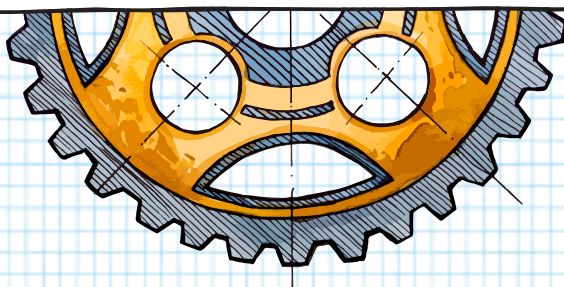
Add personal touches. Bring your expertise and perspective to the story. Add specifics. The more specific you are, the more you put your heart on the page, the more unique your story will be.

PROBLEM:

You don't know what happens next.

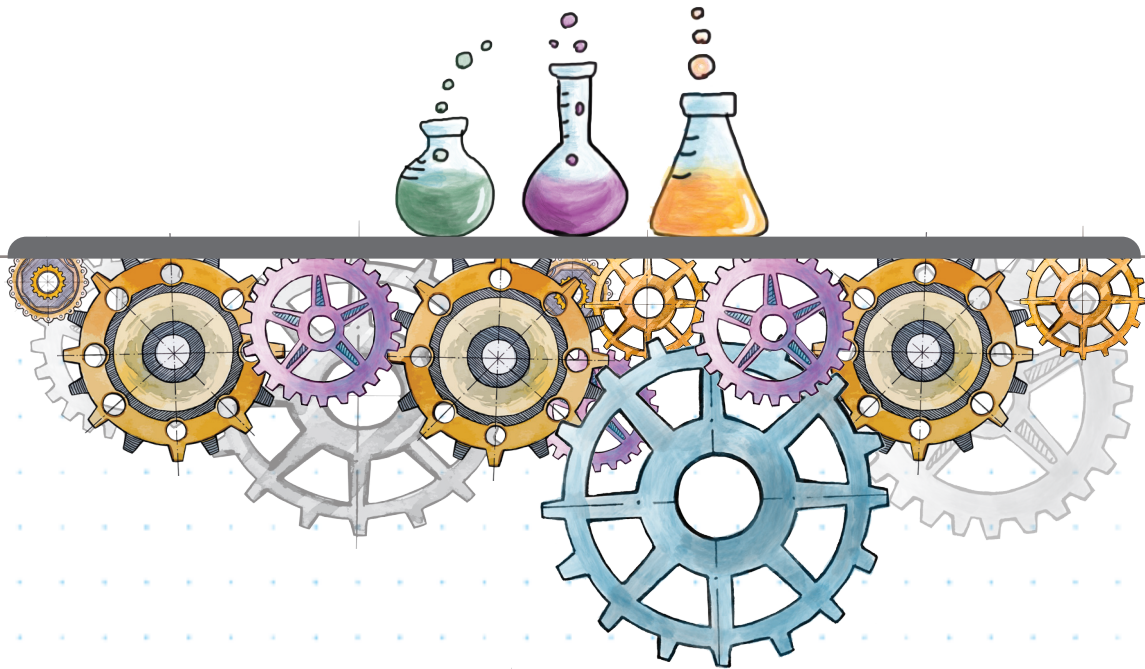
SOLUTION:

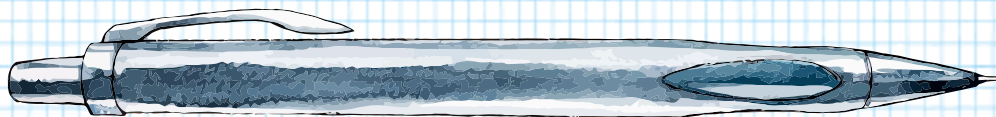
Go back to your Hero's Journey and find the next major plot point. Then, create a middle scene between where you are and that point. Keep filling the gaps between scenes, using "if-then" reasoning. You'll find your way in no time.



PART SIX:

PLANNING THE DRAFTING PROCESS





Drafting works differently for each of us, and in truth, for each project. What works once may not work again. Fortunately, as creative people, we're flexible thinkers. You can reinvent your process using the same skills used to dream up our stories.

If you're an Architect, you might plan everything to the last detail before drafting. If you're a Special Agent, you're more likely to dive in and keep going until you get stuck. If you're an Inventor, you might noodle around until you get frustrated. If you're a Collaborator, you'll probably seek out a friend's help. Whatever your natural first impulse, go with your gut. You know how you work best.

Before you start, though, plan for success by setting loose milestones. You'll want to know when you're on track, but even more importantly, when you're not. That's when it's time to problem solve.

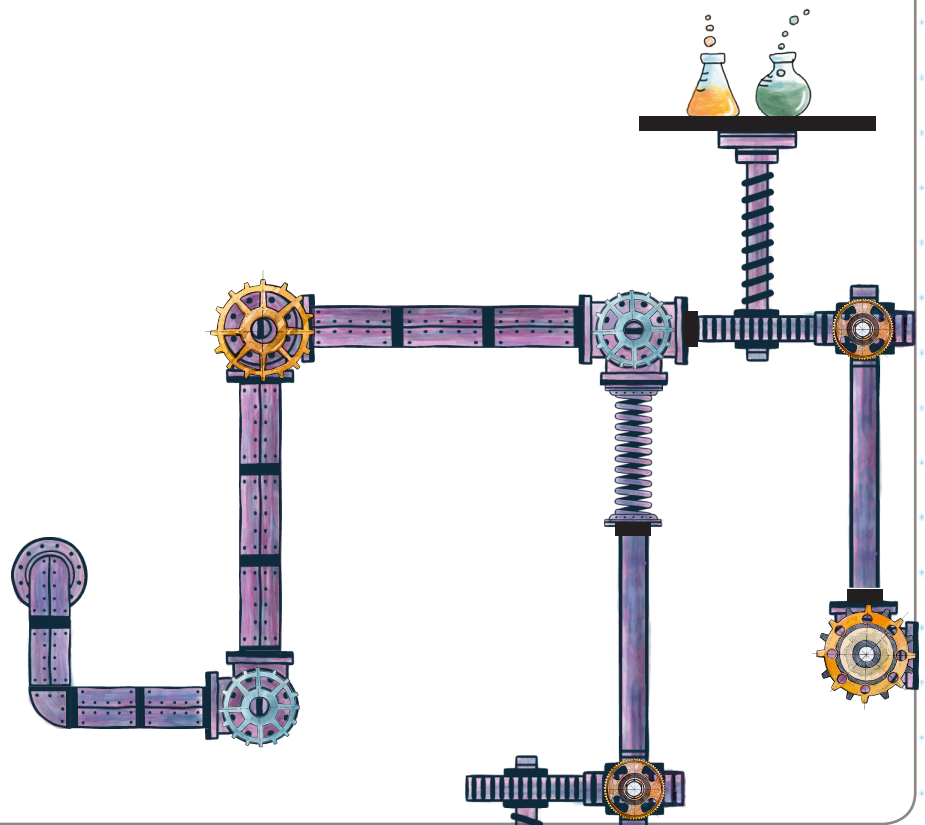
Problem solving opportunities come in all shapes and sizes. First, you might have a small problem. Maybe you don't know the best approach for the next scene. The energy just isn't there. If this happens, stop and think about your approach. Consider the Writerly Play rooms and whether a quick visit to another room might help.

Second, you might encounter a medium-sized problem, one you consider an actual block. Your frustration is keeping you from sitting down at your desk. In these moments, turn to the block-busting ideas that you'll brainstorm in this section. Sometimes, all you need is a kick start.

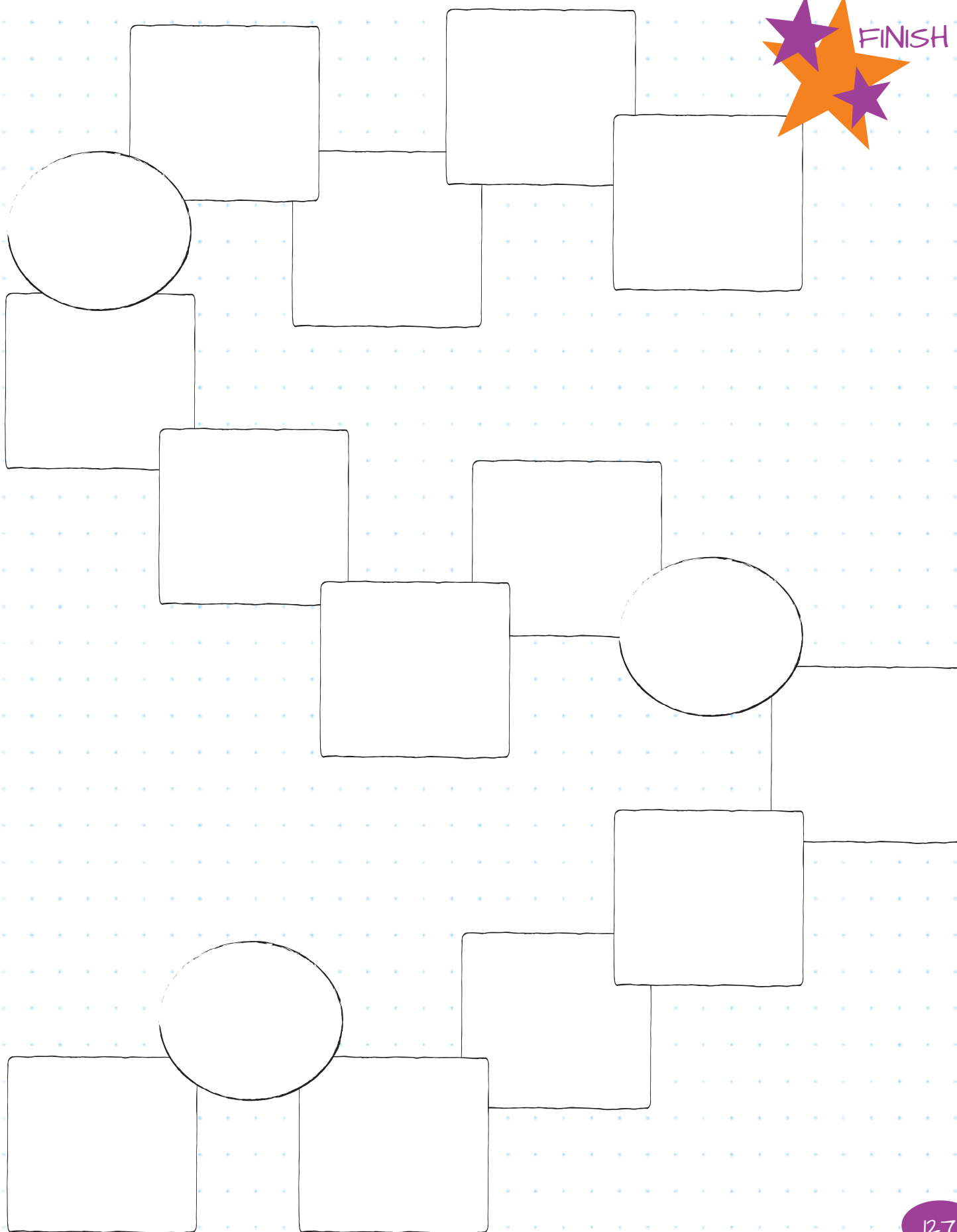
Finally, if you find yourself staring down a major, overwhelming obstacle, reach outside your normal scope. Try on a different creative style. What you're doing isn't working, so try something else. Action, no matter what it is, will launch you back into motion.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SETTING MILESTONES



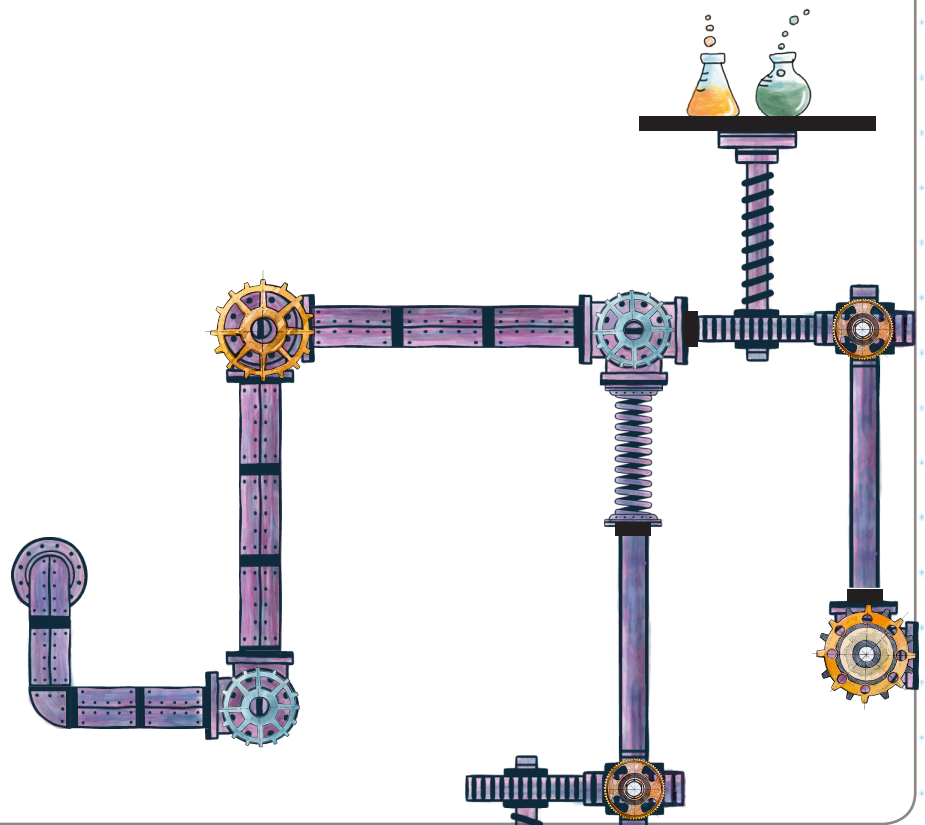
[illegible]



WAYS TO CELEBRATE!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

COLLECTING DRAFTING TOOLS



BRAINSTORM A FEW WILD CARD LINES

The diagram consists of a central speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom-left. Five rectangular boxes are arranged around the bubble, connected to it by thin lines. Two boxes are positioned above the bubble, one to the left and one to the right. Two boxes are positioned below the bubble, one to the left and one to the right. A fifth box is positioned to the right of the bubble, below the one above it. All boxes and the bubble are hand-drawn with slightly irregular black outlines on a light blue grid background.

NARRATOR PROFILE

Name: _____ Age: _____

Loves telling stories because: _____

Before telling a story, this narrator always: _____

Five of this narrator's favorite things: _____

You often hear this narrator saying: _____

This narrator's favorite stories include: _____

When this narrator isn't telling stories, they: _____

This narrator never leaves home without : _____

ENTER
HERE

LIBRARY

- Choosing a Lens
- Picking a Mentor
- Finding Patterns
- Identifying Strengths
- Reverse-Engineering
- Personalizing Strategies



ATTIC

- Clearing Space
- Collecting Ideas
- Organizing Ideas
- Asking Questions
- Finding the Heart
- Clarifying Goals



CAFE

- Asking for Feedback
- Receiving Feedback
- Applying Feedback
- Learning from Failure
- Giving Feedback
- Discussing Options



WORKSHOP

- Mapping a Plan
- Structuring Ideas
- Practicing Strategies
- Observing Closely
- Rethinking and Revising
- Fine-Tuning



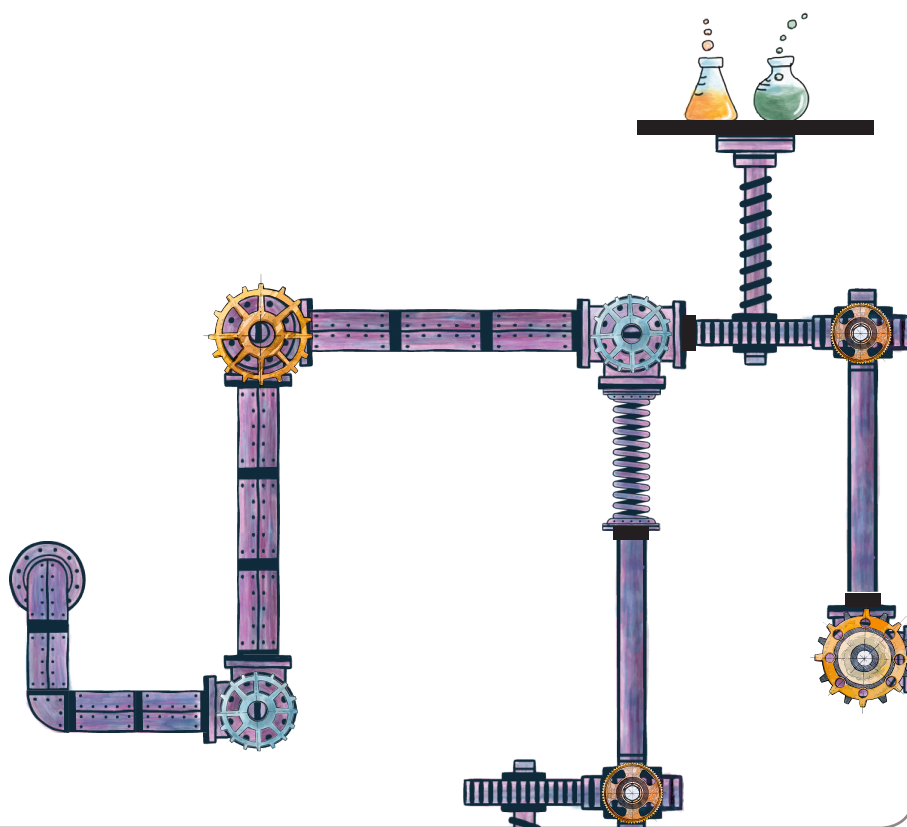
STUDIO

- Loosening Up
- Improvising
- Brainstorming
- Thinking Visually
- Stretching Ideas
- Drafting



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

DESIGNING YOUR BLOCK-BUSTING PLAN



SOS IDEAS

WRITE YOUR FUTURE SELF A LETTER
FOR WHEN YOU GET BLOCKED..

STRATEGIES THAT WORK FOR ME...

BRAINSTORMING.



ORGANIZING IDEAS



RETHINKING & REVISING

APPLYING FEEDBACK

