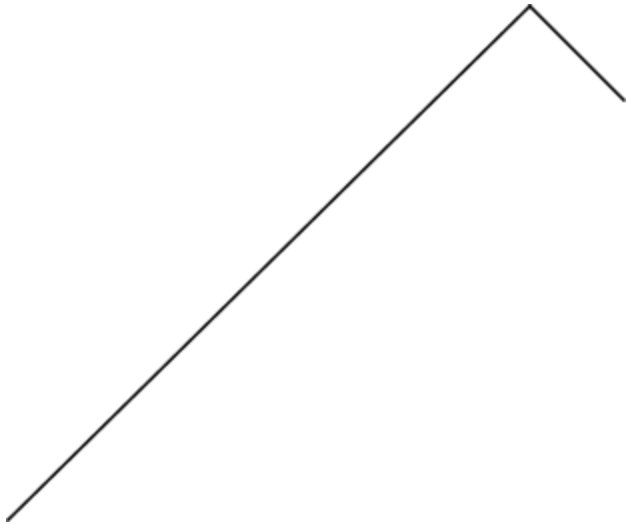


## How to Build a Successful Story Arc

Please fill in the story arc notes



*Please fill in notes of key information from Andrew Stanton:*

*Using the video and your previous observations, how can writers make the following great?*

The Setting

The Rising Action

Climax

Resolution

Make Me Care

*“When you stop and find something that you are interested in, that is not by mistake; it’s by design”*

*-Andrew Stanton*

Screenwriter Andrew Stanton says that “Make me care” is the core storytelling commandment. But how as writers can we do this? Here are a few things that might help:

**Suggestion #1: Use imagery**

Good writers almost always use a lot of imagery, which is when a writer writes in a way that evokes the five senses. We can’t turn our senses off, so when writers use sensory information, it helps to replicate real life.

Here are some examples of imagery from Robert Frost:

*“The iced branches shed crystal shells”*

*“The miniature thunder... the clatter of stone”*

*“The blueberries as big as your thumb...with the flavor of soot”*

To practice with imagery, please write an imagery-dense description of fall in Ann Arbor below. In this description, try to invoke the five senses and use language that lights up the brain! Please make it fill the entire space.

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## **Suggestion #2: Find and include the best details**

The best writers are usually the best observers. That is how they make us feel like we are there. With this in mind, think closely about what the best details will be to help the reader see the moment you are describing.

*Winter.*

*Here is what I do on the first day of snowfall every year: I step out of the house early in the morning, still in my pajamas, hugging my arms against the chill. I find the driveway, my father's car, the walls, the rooftops, and the hills buried under a foot of snow. I smile. The sky is seamless and blue, the snow so white my eyes burn. I shovel a handful of fresh snow into my mouth, listening to the muffled stillness broken only by the cawing of crows. I walk down the front steps, barefoot, and call for Hassan to come out and see.*

While knowing which details are best to share in a narrative may seem like a tricky thing, my suggestions is to think closely about what would help you to picture a person, place, or situation, and go from there. More often than not your instincts will lead you to the best details to help your reader to feel like they are there.

To try this, please go on an expedition and come back with five of the best details to describe Ann Arbor in the fall:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### **Suggestion #3: Use Indirect Characterization**

When describing a character, a writer can use direct characterization, where he/she directly tell the reader what the character is like, or indirect characterization, where he/she shows a character's personality through his or her actions, thoughts, feelings, and words, or through another character's observations and reactions. Generally, it is best to do as much indirect characterization as you can. This suggestion is usually called, "Show, Don't Tell."

*Example:*

#### Direct Characterization

*He was a stern man* →

#### Indirect Characterization

*Throughout the wedding he sat silent and stone-faced, his only communication coming through his eyes which disapproved of everything through narrow slits.*

*In the first one we are told he is stern and that is all we know; in the second we see his sternness and a thousand other things.*

Please list direct characteristics of Ann Arbor in the fall on the left side and indirect ways to show those characteristics on the other.

#### **Direct Characteristics**

*Ex: It is a unique town.*

#### **Indirect Ways to Show Them**

*Ex. While most downtowns are comprised of the same tired list of big corporation stores, Ann Arbor boasts nearly all local names: Elmos, Roos Roast...*



## The Rules of Dialogue

Dialogue is an essential part of nearly any narrative. Most written stories have between 30-60% dialogue. There are two types of dialogue that can be used:

### **Internal Dialogue**

Use internal dialogue to show the reader your thoughts. Several formats are acceptable for presenting internal dialogue, though I like having your internal thoughts in italics the best.

Example: The jump approached me rapidly. As I caught flight, I was suddenly aware that I did not have the speed to hit the landing. *There is no way I am going to make it...*

### **External Dialogue**

Use external dialogue to put the reader in the moments with you. When writing external dialogue, there are two key things you need to keep in mind. It needs to be...

...**Realistic**. This means you should make it sound like real people are talking. How can you do that?

and...

...**Grammatically Correct.** Here are the rules:

- Start a new indented paragraph every time speakers switch.

*“Wow!” said Bob.*

*“What is it?” Sarah asked.*

- You put quotation marks at the beginning of dialogue and after the punctuation at the end.

*“Rules of Dialogue!” Bob said.*

- Correct punctuation before the dialogue:

- If the dialogue starts the sentence, put a quotation mark and begin.

*“Really?” Sarah replied.*

- If the dialogue comes in the middle of the sentence, put a comma before the quotation marks.

*Bob smiled and continued, “You better believe it!”*

- Correct punctuation at the end of the dialogue:

- If the dialogue ends the sentence, use a period (or question/exclamation mark) inside the quotation marks.

*Sarah’s face lit up, “Yeah, I love grammar.”*

- If the dialogue ends in the middle of the sentence, use a comma, question, or exclamation marks.

*“Well let’s get started,” Bob said.*

- Lastly, make sure to capitalize the first letter of the dialogue

*Sarah nodded her head and exclaimed, “Yeah!”*

