

# The Art of Storytelling

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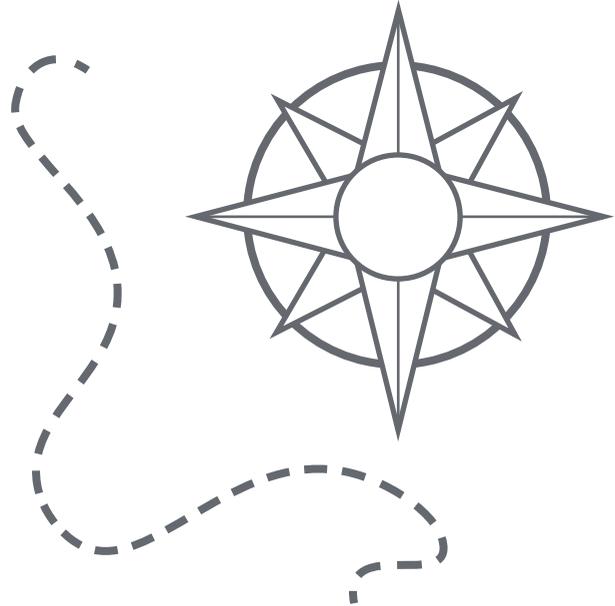
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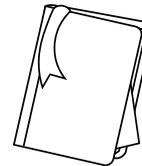
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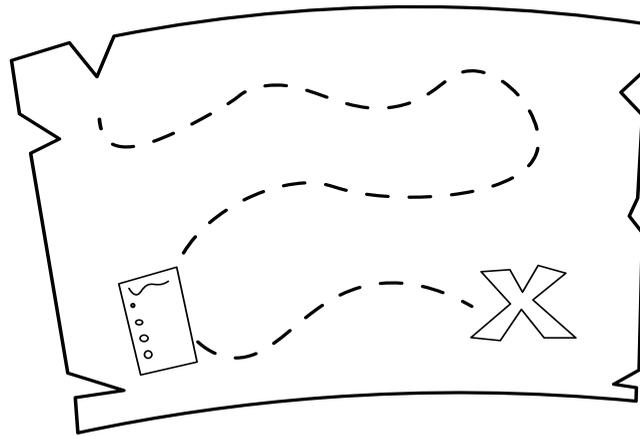


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# CHAPTER 11

## Planning the Story

Before you begin writing your short story, it helps to understand that there is no single right way to start. Some writers begin with a strong idea for a character, while others picture a place so clearly that the setting comes first. Some writers already have several plot ideas in mind and want to get everything out on paper right away. All of these approaches are valid, and most writers use a mix of them.

In this chapter, you will explore your story ideas through a variety of brainstorming activities. You may find yourself focusing on character first, then jumping to setting, then back to conflict. That is normal. Writing rarely happens in a straight line, and you do not need to complete everything in order. The goal is to gather ideas and begin shaping them into something you understand.

A brain dump is especially helpful if you have lots of ideas and are not sure where to start. This is a space to write freely without worrying about organization, spelling, or whether an idea is “good.” You are simply collecting possibilities. As you work through the worksheets, you will start to notice which ideas feel strongest and which ones belong together.



“I’m dishonest, and a dishonest man you can always trust to be dishonest.”

**ANSWER:**



You may skip around, return to earlier pages, or add new notes as your thinking changes. These activities are meant to support your process, not control it. By the end of the chapter, you will have a collection of ideas about your characters, setting, conflict, theme, and story goal that you can use when you are ready to begin planning your story more carefully.



## LESSON EXERCISE:

Now it's your turn! Take your time with this assignment. You won't be able to do it all in one sitting, and that's okay. This could take an entire week (or more), and you will probably come back and add more ideas as you go. Most likely, your story will continue to develop in your mind even when you don't have your workbook open.



As you build your timeline, you may realize that you need more information about a character, setting, or conflict. When that happens, go back to your earlier worksheets and add new ideas. Writers move back and forth between planning and organizing all the time. Each step helps strengthen the next, and your timeline will continue to change as your story becomes clearer.



5.

“As you wish.”

**ANSWER:**



## LESSON EXERCISE:

Use the timeline pages to map out the main events of your story in order, focusing on what happens first (beginning), next (middle), and last (end). As you work, look back at your planning worksheets from the previous chapter and add or refine details when needed, especially if new ideas come to you. You may discover gaps, stronger choices, or clearer connections as you organize your events, and that is part of the process. Move back and forth between the timeline and your notes until your story feels clearer and more organized.