



Peter Sawyer

Creative Writing - Plot

I've been writing ever since I was a teenager, scribbling bad sci-fi and contemporary short stories in a notebook on the school bus. I've now got 10 books published through Amazon and am currently co-writing a trilogy to be published together in October 2020.

As so many people have so much time, I'm putting together a pack to help you write your first complete short story or novel or just as fun things to do with the days of lockdown. Each part could be a short activity or stretch it out as long as you want. My writing style is very organic, I'm not very good at planning things out but I've tried to make this as usable as possible!

I'm not a teacher, but I am a history graduate and I've been doing Living History for 2 years. Covid-19 has hit my business hard, it's unlikely that I'll be working again before September but I'm fortunate that I don't have any children to look after. So, for anyone who's having to try their hand at home-schooling, I've put together this education pack based on my work as an author and my Living History workshops. Feel free to print, copy and distribute this pack as far and wide as you want.

I'll also be doing packs on:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vikings and Saxons• Ancient Roman society• Ancient Roman army• Ancient Greece- Athens• Ancient Greece- Sparta• Medieval | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• World War One• World War Two• More creative writing exercises• Favourite books• More to follow |
|--|--|

*Keep an eye on www.peter-sawyer.com
or "Peter Sawyer, author" on Facebook or Twitter*

You'll need:

- Whatever you're most comfortable writing with- pen or pencil
- Whatever you're most comfortable drawing with
- An A4 notebook/pad/paper
- If you prefer, you could do this all on a laptop or tablet: you'll need a writing programme like Microsoft Word and a drawing one such as Microsoft Paint

- *Things to do are marked like this*

You need to have done Part 1- Character and Part 2- Setting before this!

You'll need both of them to hand for this part.



Part 3- Plot

You've got your character and setting. Let's send them out and make them do something! For most writers, getting from *Once upon a time* to *The End* is the hardest part and causes trembling, sweating, sleepless nights and incoherent gibbering. This part of my Creative Writing Guide is designed to help reduce these symptoms.

Our hero

- *Write about what you want more than anything else (find true love, become a parent, publish a creative writing guide, visit Vienna) and what's stopping you getting there.*
- *In Part 1- Character, you wrote what the one thing your character wants or needs more than anything else. Write it in big letters at the head of your page. This is your cannon, the character's motivation, the fire under their backside.*
- *Write down all the things that will potentially stop your character achieving their goal from the last activity. This could be their clingy partner, their alcoholism, their social anxiety or the fact that they're a werewolf.*

Have a look back at your character profile, description and timeline to give you some help and inspiration. Perhaps there's already something that jumps out at you or something might come to mind. Internal or personal problems (bereavement, fears or bad habits) can be just as difficult to overcome as external problems (world war, racism, political change).

The adversary

You might have already created this character in Part 1, it might be something intangible (racism, poverty, class prejudice) or something internal to your main character (their kleptomania or illiteracy) Just like your character, the adversary will have their own needs, wants, desires and obstacles.

- *What does your adversary want more than anything?*

This might be a personal need/want/desire (getting the girl), it might be something fantastical (conquering the world) or it might be something less concrete (subjugation of people with red hair)

- *Why haven't they achieved this yet? What obstacles or restraints are stopping it?*
- *Write a scene where your main character first encounters their adversary*

The first time they're bullied at school, the first time they're discriminated against, the first time the villain steals the magic lamp

Lighting the fuse on the big bang

It's time to get your character moving

- *Write 5-10 scenarios, just 20-30 words, that will make it impossible for your character to stay as they are.*

Some ideas: going to university, a war, tragic news, discovering a box of bones in the loft

- *Expand one of these scenarios into a 200-500 word scene as the climax to your novel*

The journey to the end of your story will be filled with little conflicts, crises or potholes in the road.

- *List as many of these obstacles to overcome or problems to solve before your character reaches the climax or final battle*
- *Write a potential climax scenario*
- *Make a timeline, plotting your story:*
 - *Try using the scene set in your location (Part 2) or by using the scene from the character's timeline (Part 1)*
 - *Use your climax scene about 4/5ths of the way through*
 - *Perhaps try the return to your setting (Part 2)*

Think about how your character and setting change through the story.

- *Write a Before and After column for each one*

Perhaps the character goes from being a compulsive liar to being honest and open, or from working for an evil multinational corporation to running their own charity. Maybe your setting is totally destroyed or rebuilt into a new apartment complex.

- *Write an after conversation between your main character and another character that shows how they and the setting have changed.*

Look back at the character profiles you made in Part 1. Two or three of these are going to friends or allies of your main character.

- *For each of them, write how they'll help the main character overcome the obstacles/problems, what they want more than anything else and what setbacks will impede them.*
- *Add their timelines alongside the main ones. These are your subplots.*
- *Add the adversary's timeline too.*

The Core

Plot is what happens in the story. The Core is what it all means. This could be 'people change', 'love conquers all', 'aliens make better dads' or 'new technology will destroy us all'.

- *Free write around your core.*

You might change your mind later, so feel free to change it. When you've got it, write a short version on a big piece of paper or make it your desktop background so it's there. If your core changes, that's fine!

One thing to help you get a grip can be the hook, the one-line summary that an advertiser would use to describe your book. This might include the characters, the adversary, the triggering incident, the setting or your core.

- *Write it down!*

Now, in case you need it, here's a kick in the bum to get you writing! Whether it's a short story, novel, epic saga or trilogy, get going!



Come back if you're struggling for motivation, got addicted to 1970s musicals, got writer's block or found a box of old schoolbooks under the stairs.

Part 4- Playing around, this will be online on Friday 24th April 2020.