

Writing tips for My Twist on a Tale: Everyday Heroes

We're asking you to write a story about a local hero – someone who has made a difference to your life, your home, or the town or city you live in. Here are some tips to help you get writing.

Get thinking

The first thing to do is to gather some ideas. You'll need a hero – and a heroic deed they have done. Your hero could be a friend, a member of your family, a member of your community, or even an imaginary superhero.

Remember: Your story does not have to be true. You can tell a true story, an almost true story, or let your imagination run wild!

What makes your hero a hero? You'll need a difficult situation for your hero to overcome, making an individual or lots of people's lives better.

You'll also need to decide the special quality your hero has that helps them to become a hero. It could be bravery, or strength, or intelligence – or even a superpower.

NOT ALL
HEROES
WEAR
CAPES

My Twist
on a Tale
Everyday Heroes

When you've decided who your hero is, what your hero does, and how your hero does it, you're ready to...



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Get planning

A great story should have an engaging beginning that makes your readers excited and a satisfying ending that makes your readers really pleased that they finished it so before you start writing, plan your beginning and ending, and work out how you will get from one to the other. You should be able to sum up a great story in four sentences:

- **The set up:** what's the situation at the start of the story?
- **The conflict:** what's the problem that your hero will solve?
- **The climax:** to add excitement and tension to your story, the problem should get worse before it gets better. It might even seem impossible to solve – until...
- **The resolution:** your hero solves the problem. Hurrah!

Before you start writing, try telling your story in just four sentences – and have a good look at them. Will the beginning be engaging? Will the ending be satisfying? Do the conflict and the climax make sense, and add tension and excitement? It's much easier to see what you like about your story – and what could be improved – when it's just four sentences long.

Thinking about characters

There may be lots of different people in your story, but you'll probably focus on just one or two of them. The reader may or may not need to know what they look like, what they're wearing, or how old they are. But the reader definitely needs and wants to know what these people are like. How will you show their qualities and characteristics to the reader?

We don't truly find out what someone is like because they tell us what they're like. We work it out by seeing what they do and by hearing what they say. Show the reader what your characters are like. Don't tell the reader your hero is brave – show them being brave. Don't tell the reader your hero is kind – show them being kind. Show the reader those things and they'll feel like they've met and really come to know your characters.

Writing

Before you start, check the word limit for the type of story you want to write. How many pages is that roughly? Once you've worked that out, forget the word limit for now. Get writing.

Don't worry about spelling – you can check any words you're not sure about when you've finished. If you're writing on a computer, ignore the wiggly red line underneath those words. They may not even make it to your final draft!

Forget everything else – just concentrate on telling your story. Think about the key scenes in your story: picture the scene in your head, and try to recreate it in words so that your readers will see the same picture. Think about the key dramatic moments in your story: imagine them as a film playing inside your head, and try to recreate that movie on the page so that your readers will see what you see.

Remember – forget the word limit! You know roughly how many pages your story will be – but don't keep counting and stop when you get to the limit. Just tell your story.

Editing

This is probably the most important part of writing a story. This is when an average story becomes something good – and a good story becomes something great.

Read through your story. Does every word add something to it? Does every sentence say something different to the last? Delete or replace any that don't.

Take your story and a pencil into a quiet corner and read it aloud. Lock yourself in the bathroom if you want to be sure no one else can hear! As you read, listen carefully to the sound of your voice. Do you like the sound of your story? Good writing is like good music – it should have a rhythm to it. Any sentences you think sound wrong, put an X alongside them. If you stumble and trip over any sentences as you read, there is probably something wrong with them. Put an X alongside them too. Then put your story to one side for at least an hour or even a day if you have time!

When you come back to your story, look carefully at the first sentence you marked with an X. Read that sentence again. Try re-writing it in a different way – once, twice or even three different ways on a blank document or piece of paper. Which version of the sentence do you like best? Copy (or copy and paste) it into your story. Repeat for all the sentences marked with an X. Every change you make will improve your story and help the reader to enjoy it even more.

When you're happy with your story, ask someone else to read it and suggest any changes or improvements. Don't disagree with them – ask them to explain what they think you should do, then thank them and decide whether you want to act on their advice or ignore it. It's your story – so the final decision is yours.

Finally, check your spelling, punctuation and word count. If you've written too much, look for the scenes or sentences that your story can survive without. Cutting them may even make your story stronger.

Good luck! Enjoy planning, writing and editing your story!

#MyTwistonaTale

