Your notes

KS3 English: revision notes

Creative writing

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Planning a story

- Decide who, where, when and what happens: a problem that builds to a climax and is then resolved.
- Keep it focused: a few characters and one main event work better than lots of events.
- Try different structures: a **flashback**, a **circular structure** (ending where you began), or starting in the middle of the action.

Openings and description

- **Hook** the reader: start with action, **dialogue**, a question or a striking description.
- **Show, don't tell**: "Her hands trembled as she reached for the handle" is better than "She was scared".
- Use the five senses, precise verbs ("sprinted" rather than "went") and **imagery** such as similes, metaphors and **personification**.
- Pathetic fallacy can set the mood: a storm for a tense scene.

Sentences and paragraphs

- Vary sentence lengths: short sentences build tension; longer sentences suit description.
- Vary sentence openings: start with a verb, an adverb, a preposition or a subordinate clause.
- Start a new paragraph for a change of time, place, topic or person (**TiPToP**).
- In **dialogue**, start a new line each time a different person speaks.

Checking your work

- Leave time to proofread spelling, punctuation and paragraphs.
- Check that your ending is satisfying and links back to your opening.

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Key terms

Narrative	A story.
Hook	An opening that grabs the reader's attention.
Show, don't tell	Letting the reader work out feelings from actions and details.
Imagery	Language that creates a picture in the reader's mind.
Personification	Giving human qualities to something that isn't human.
Resolution	The part of a story where the problem is solved.
Circular structure	A story that ends where it began.
Flashback	A scene that jumps back to an earlier time.
Dialogue	Speech between characters.
TiPToP	New paragraph for a change of time, place, topic or person.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What does "show, don't tell" mean?
2. Which sentence shows fear rather than telling it?
3. Why might a writer use a very short sentence?
4. What does TiPToP help you remember?
5. What is a hook?
6. Which of these is personification?
7. What is the resolution of a story?
8. When should you start a new line in dialogue?

Answers

1. Let the reader work out feelings from actions and details
2. Her hands trembled as she reached for the handle
3. To build tension or make a moment stand out
4. When to start a new paragraph: time, place, topic, person
5. An opening that grabs the reader's attention
6. The wind whispered through the trees
7. Where the problem is solved and the story ends
8. Each time a different person speaks

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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