

Short Story Writing Tips

1. Keep to two main characters – one male and one female – *that way your reader will know which one you are referring to most of the time (he said, she said).*
2. You don't have to be original – only interesting! - *it is a good idea to have a few really good stories that you tell well. Adapt these to the task you have been given.*
3. Plan a SHORT beginning and a SHORT ending – *most of the story should be the middle where things happen and characters think and feel.*
4. Plan a resolution in your ending (e.g. solving a problem) and refer to it in the beginning – *a good short story has the reader wondering how a problem is going to be resolved - and then it is.*
5. Plan you last sentence – *ending with a punch leaves your reader smiling. This is the time to be original.*
6. Keep your reader informed of what is happening, and what characters are thinking and feeling – *we cannot read your mind. If it isn't written in the story it doesn't happen (check #10 below).*
7. **DON'T** start lots of sentences with the same word – *read it over to check and cross out or substitute words to avoid this.*
8. Include some direct speech in your story (with correct punctuation) AND AT LEAST ONE piece of indirect speech – *avoid using "said" (something like "the doctor replied that he had seen spots like this before but only on a ladybird." Or "Katy thought to*

herself that she had never seen such a strange sight in all her life.”)

9. Leave at least five minutes to check your story for all of your target points – *a finished and corrected story is 100 times better than an unfinished and hurried one – whatever the style and standard.*
10. Whenever you are stuck, or taking a break, read the story over to yourself under your breath but mouthing the words – *if it sounds right when you read it out it is probably OK. If you pause when you are reading then check there is a pause marker (like a comma or fullstop).*
11. Use any spare time to correct spelling – *you can try out some attempts on your planning sheet.*
12. Make sure your story has at least one question mark (?) exclamation mark (!) and at least three commas (,) –*if you know how to use these punctuation marks you need to show off.*
13. Use parentheses – *either to comment or speak to the reader.*
14. Tell your reader something directly – *it helps the reader to feel part of the story. He/she thinks they are important to you.*