Student Name

Papers are always Double Spaced:

1. Highlight Text and Hold down ctrl+2
2. Right Click 🡪 Paragraph🡪Line

Spacing 🡪 Double

Right Justified

Teacher Name

Class Level/Hour

Date (Day, Month Spelled Out, Full Year ex. 10 October 2013)

Creative Title (Centered)

Push “Tab” to indent

each paragraph.

**First Paragraphs:**

* The first sentence of your short story should catch your reader’s attention with the **unusual,**the**unexpected,**an **action,**or a [**conflict**](http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/creative/crisis-vs-conflict.htm). Begin with tension and immediacy. Make your reader want to continue.
* Start in the middle of the action or begin in the character’s voice; with either of these, it is important to know your story’s point of view.

**1st Line Examples from Literature:**

1. If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. —J. D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye (1951)
2. Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. —Charles Dickens, David Copperfield (1850)
3. It was a wrong number that started it, the telephone ringing three times in the dead of night, and the voice on the other end asking for someone he was not. —Paul Auster, City of Glass (1985)
4. The moment one learns English, complications set in. —Felipe Alfau, Chromos (1990)
5. It was the day my grandmother exploded. —Iain M. Banks, The Crow Road (1992)

### Choosing Point of View:

### As a writer, you need to determine who is going to tell the story

### First Person. The story is told from the view of “I.” The narrator is either the *protagonist* (main character) and directly affected by unfolding events, or the narrator is a*secondary character* telling the story revolving around the protagonist. This is a good choice for beginning writers because it is the easiest to write.

### Example: #2 in examples above.

### Third Person. The story tells what “he”, “she,” or “it” does. The third-person narrator’s perspective can be *limited* (telling the story from one character’s viewpoint) or *omniscient* (where the narrator knows everything about all of the characters).

### Example: *Twilight* or *Harry Potter* is considered 3rd person limited. 3rd person omniscient would be a narrator commenting on the events of your story, an all-seeing Godlike figure who knows everything about the characters and situation.

* **Develop Characters**
  + In order to develop a living, breathing, multi-faceted character, it is important to know details before beginning. Such as:
    - **Appearance.**Gives a visual understanding of the character.
* **Action.**Shows what kind of person the character is, by describing actions rather than simply listing adjectives.
* **Speech.** Develop the character as a person — don’t merely have your character announce important plot details.
* **Thought.**Bring the reader into your character’s mind, to show them your character’s unexpressed memories, fears, and hopes.
* **Setting** 
  + Setting includes the time, location, context, and atmosphere where the plot takes place.
  + Include enough detail to let your readers picture the scene *but only details that actually add something to the story*. (For example, do not describe Mary locking the front door, walking across the yard, opening the garage door, putting air in her bicycle tires, getting on her bicycle–none of these details matter except that she rode out of the driveway without looking down the street.)
  + Rather than feed your readers information about the weather, population statistics, or how far it is to the grocery store, substitute descriptive details so your reader can experience the location the way your characters do.
  + The setting is not listed in a few sentences, but rather combined into the plot.

**Body Paragraphs:**

* **Plot**
  + Plot is what happens, the storyline, the action.
  + It is how you set up the situation, where the turning points of the story are, and what the characters do at the end of the story.
* **Create Conflict and Tension**
  + Conflict produces tension that makes the story begin. Tension is created by opposition between characters or characters and external/internal conditions.
    - **Possible Conflicts Include:**
* The protagonist against another individual
* The protagonist against nature (or technology)
* The protagonist against society
* The protagonist against God
* The protagonist against himself or herself.

### Build to the Climax (Crisis)

### This is the turning point, or the most exciting and dramatic moment, in the story.

### Recognition, decision, and resolution – the character understands what they didn’t before, realizes what must be done, or finally decides to do it.

### In Cinderella’s case, “the payoff is when the slipper fits.”

### The climax will affect the story’s resolution.

### Conclusion/Last Paragraphs

### Resolution/Solution

### In short fiction, it is difficult to provide a complete resolution and you often need to just show that characters are beginning to change in some way or starting to see things differently.

**In General:**

* **Write Meaningful Dialogue**
  + Dialogue is what your characters **say** to each other (or to themselves).
  + **Each speaker gets his/her own paragraph**
    - “Where are you going?” John cracked his knuckles while he looked at the floor. “To the racetrack.” Mary edged toward the door, keeping her eyes on John’s bent head. “Not again,” John stood up, flexing his fingers. “We are already maxed out on our credit cards.”

**Confusing 🡪**

* + - “Where are you going?” John asked nervously.  
      “To the racetrack,” Mary said, trying to figure out whether John was too upset to let her get away with it this time.  
      “Not again,” said John, wondering how they would make that month’s rent. “We are already maxed out on our credit cards.”

**New line for each speaker 🡪**

**Write Meaningful Dialogue Labels**

“John asked nervously” is an example of “telling.” The author could write “John asked very nervously” or “John asked so nervously that his voice was shaking,” and it still wouldn’t make the story any more effective.

How can the author convey John’s state of mind, without coming right out and tellinig the reader about it? By inference. That is, mention a detail that conjures up in the reader’s mind the image of a nervous person.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | John sat up. “Wh– where are you going?” |
| Yes | “Where are you going?” John stammered, staring at his Keds. |
| Yes | Deep breath. Now or never. “Where are you going?” |
| No | John sat up and took a deep breath, knowing that his confrontation with Mary had to come now, or it would never come at all. “Wh– where are you going?” he stammered nervously, staring at his Keds. |
|  | Beware — a little detail goes a long way.Why would your reader bother to think about what is going on, if the author carefully explains what each and every line means? |

Let’s return to the first example, and show how dialogue labels can affect the meaning of a passage.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | “Where are you going?” John cracked his knuckles while he looked at the floor. “To the racetrack.” Mary edged toward the door, keeping her eyes on John’s bent head. “Not again,” John stood up, flexing his fingers. “We are already maxed out on our credit cards.” |
|  | In the above revision, John nervously asks Mary where she is going, and Mary seems equally nervous about going.But if you play a little with the paragraphing.. |
| Yes | “Where are you going?” John cracked his knuckles while he looked at the floor. “To the racetrack.” Mary edged toward the door, keeping her eyes on John’s bent head. “Not again.” John stood up, flexing his fingers. “We are already maxed out on our credit cards.” |
|  | All I changed was the paragraphing (and I changed a comma to a period.)Now Mary seems more aggressive — she seems to be moving to block John, who seems nervous and self-absorbed. And John seems to be bringing up the credit card problem as an excuse for his trip to the racing track. He and Mary seem to be desperate to for money now. I’d rather read the rest of the second story than the rest of the first one. |

I'm afraid his grades will start effecting football.