

YOUR FIRST LOOK @ STORY



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO
THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS
AND STRUCTURE OF STORY

D.G. MAYES

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D.G. MAYES
WRITE YOUR FIRST STORY
JULY 2018



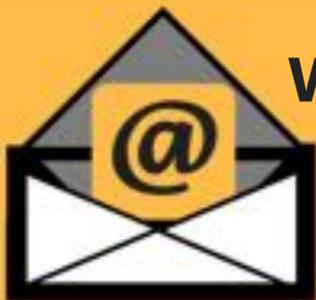
**FOR THOSE WHO ENJOY
STORIES, CHOOSE TO LEARN,
AND LOVE TO SHARE.**

YOUR FIRST LOOK @ STORY

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AND
STRUCTURE OF STORY

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INTRODUCTION

Hello,

Thank you for checking out Your First Look @ Story. This book is a brief Introduction to the essential elements and structure required to craft a story. I created this document for complete beginner's who have an interest in story creation, yet those familiar with story-writing may enjoy this document as well. May it spark everyone's interest in learning more about story-writing.

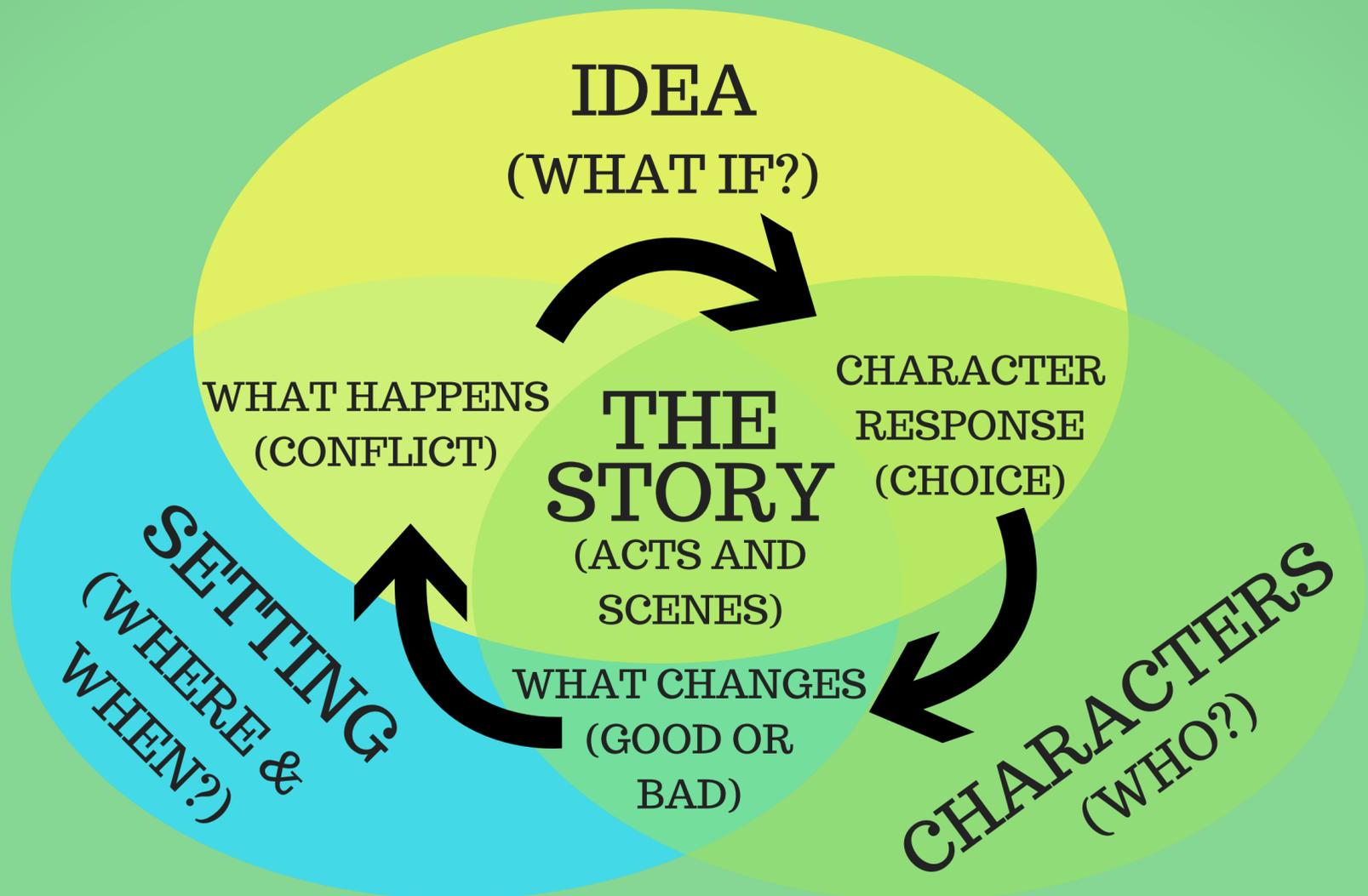
First, we'll define a story, and what it contains. We will then answer several critical questions, who, what, when, where, why and how? Who are the characters, what are the problems, when and where will the story take place, why are you writing the story, and how is a story structured? Finally, with all of those questions answered, we'll look at the different perspectives in which you may present a story to readers.

Once again, thank you, and I hope you enjoy Your First Look @ Story.

Sincerely,
D.G. Mayes
Author

WHAT IS A STORY?

What makes it a story? A story is a descriptive-presentation of events which explore interesting ideas via relatable characters who live in a unique setting.



What does a story need? The first three necessary elements that make up a story are an Idea, a Setting, and the Characters. Next, we explore these three things via Acts. These Acts contain written Scenes. These Scenes engage readers by describing what conflict happens, how characters choose to respond to that conflict, and what changes occur as a result of our character's choice and action. That result raises questions, luring readers into the next Scene. The cycle repeats itself, each time exploring the idea further, building the stakes higher, until we reach the end of the story, delivering the story's meaning.

WHY ARE YOU WRITING THE STORY?



Define the purpose of your story. Why are you writing the story? What's the big idea? What is the story's concern? What's the reader's takeaway? Maybe it's a specific moral, lesson, or point that you want to make; it will be why you want to write the story. Pick one thing as your story's primary purpose and focus on that. That one thing will be your story's controlling-idea.

What is your story's genre? Determining genre will help in shaping the problems that the characters will face. Each genre has unique obligatory-scenes and conventions that attract a particular audience. Think of the genres that you love. Note the scenes and conventional elements uniquely associated with that genre. The characters, their problems, and the setting of a story must be representative of that story's genre.

Internal and External Ideas. Some ideas are external, while others are internal. External-ideas are tangible things or events that happen to our characters and world, like a boat sinking, or a character winning the lottery. Internal-ideas are emotional feelings, beliefs, or world-views held by characters. Both types of ideas are useful in the development of a relatable story.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?



What are the story's problems? These problems should relate to your story's controlling-idea. They'll form our story's Plot Points. Plot Points are conflicts that force our character to make an important-choice. These conflicts increase in size as the story progresses. The smallest problem is an Inciting event which helps to establish genre, setting, and who our characters are, and their positions the world to the readers. The most significant problem is your final plot point; the story's climax. This final-dilemma completes the protagonist's character-arc and delivers your story's controlling-idea.

What about the Turning Points? Some plot points will create an irreversible change in the character's direction or focus, and they're called Turning Points. Again, these problems must be big enough to force the protagonist to make a choice that will irreversibly change their lives. The First Turning Point creates an opportunity or obstacle for the character in some way, and it will be the thing that sets the protagonist on their journey. The Middle Turning Point brings a story's most significant problem into clear focus for both the protagonist and the reader. The next Turning Point creates a substantial setback for the protagonist, forcing them towards the story's most crucial conflict; the story's Climax.

WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS?



Who are the Main Characters? The main character is the protagonist; they'll be the focus of the story's purpose and problems. The Antagonist is the villain; they'll be the primary source of conflict for the story's protagonist. The antagonist and protagonist's developing relationship helps readers gather emotional meaning. The conflicts created by their opposing views, status, and goals reveal this meaning to the readers.

Who are the Supporting Characters? These characters are usually friends, allies or adversaries. Friends and allies are generally mentors, sidekicks, or love interests that convey information and support to the protagonist. Adversaries create conflicts and may even be in alignment with the antagonist.

What about the Main Character's Arc? A character-arc is a shift from one internalized state of being to an opposite state. For example, a character may change from being selfish to becoming charitable, from discontentment to contentment, or be transformed from a hero into a villain. Regardless of whether the shift is positive or negative, it's polar shift is the crucial thing. A character's internalized state and that states shift are presented through the character's choices and actions.

WHEN & WHERE IS THE STORY'S SETTING?



What is the Setting? The setting contains your ideas and characters within a specific time and place in which your story occurs. Setting locations can change throughout the story, but must remain consistent and relative to the story's idea, characters, and your choice of genre. The genre may vary considerably, including, for example, Fantasy, Science Fiction, or Realism, and exist in their various forms like Utopian or Dystopian.

When does the story take place? The descriptions of characters, their world, and their problems must be relative to the time in which they exist. Everything is affected by time, culture, technology, politics, social norms, values, fashion, architecture, speech, the list could go on indefinitely. Whether past, present, or future, descriptions of everything must remain consistent to the context of the times in which they occur. Stories may take place over various timeframes, an hour, day, month, year, or thousands of years. As time passes, everything changes. Maybe there's progress, stagnation, or decline which affect the setting. You may wish to make a timeline to keep track of the changes and events in your longer stories. This timeline will help you maintain consistency as you write.

STORY STRUCTURE

One Act, two Acts, three, four, five, seven, nine! A stories structure can be broken down or divided into Acts. Each Act serves to help a writer focus clearly on a particular section of their composition. A writer may break the story into any number of Acts. It depends on personal preference for how the writer chooses to view a story. The story contains the same core elements regardless of the number of Acts. For writers who are new to story writing, I would suggest keeping things simple by using a Three-Act Structure.

A Three-Act structure. Each Act has requirements which achieve a particular set of goals.

Act-One's goal is to set-up the story for readers, letting them know what to expect going forward. The writer fulfills these requirements by writing scenes that will introduce the main characters, the setting, and present the story's Inciting-Event and the First Turning Point.

Act-Two's goal is to build on the story's set-up. Satisfy these requirements by writing Unfocused Discovery scenes, the Middle Turning Point, the Focused Trials and Errors scenes, and the Third Turning Point.

Act-Three's goal is to pay off the story's set-up and build-up. The writer will fulfill these requirements by writing scenes for the Final-Push, the Climax, and the Resolution.

THE SET-UP ELEMENTS

Act-One: The story's set-up. It requires introductions for main characters, the setting, and a problem that's associated with the controlling-idea.

Introduce the Main Characters and Setting. Reader's need a first look at the protagonist, the setting and maybe even the antagonist. These scenes should hook the reader's attention with an unusual or unexpected thing about the characters, the environment, or the situation for which characters find themselves involved. There must be an action or conflict that creates a question for readers, what's going to happen next?

The Inciting-Event. This event will for good or bad affect the main character. Also, it may be the first time that the antagonist is mentioned or introduced. The scene's events should firmly cement the protagonist and antagonist's position in the world and that those positions are at odds with one another.

The First Turning Point. This element contains a life-changing choice for the protagonist. Willingly or not, they must react to a conflict that forces them to go on their journey, this is a significant turning point for the character, meaning that their life and goal changes in a dramatic way as they can no longer deny the story's main problem. They can't go back to the way life was before. This turning point ends Act-One and may set the stage for a change of the setting in the next Act.

THE BUILD-UP ELEMENTS

Act-Two: This is the story's build-up. Its requirements will build upon what the set-up that Act-One achieved.

The Unfocused Discovery Scenes. Here the story depicts the characters unfocused, reactionary, often misguided attempts to resolve the problem presented at the First Turning Point. The events result in worse or more complex situations. Think of it as trials and errors, a discovery period, or a learning phase. The character explores and searches, trying to piece together the story's central problem as new bits of information are learned or revealed. Usually, they gain skills, allies, knowledge or items necessary to help them throughout the rest of the story. They may also encounter conflicts directly or indirectly related to the antagonist.

The Middle Turning Point. This element occurs when an unexpected event or revelation raises a Dramatic-Question associated with the controlling-idea and raises the stakes for the protagonist. The protagonist and readers must clearly understand the story's central problem now. The protagonist must declare to take responsibility and act towards solving that problem. They'll integrate the new information revealed here with the discoveries learned during the complications of the Unfocused Discovery Scenes. This information enables them to formulate a focused plan of approach towards trying to solve the story's main problem. The Middle Turning Point signals the halfway point of the story.

THE BUILD-UP ELEMENTS

The Focused Trials and Errors. This part of the story depicts the characters taking on the responsibility of solving the main problem. They discuss, finalizing, and attempting to carry out the now focused plan that they had began to formulate in at the Middle Turning Point. Usually, this is a move to dramatic, new, and different circumstances. Further complications, trials, and challenges are faced and may be successfully passed or failed. Whether the protagonist is successful or not, they will adjust their plans in the hopes that they'll make some progress towards solving the main problem.

The Third Turning Point. The events of this scene will show the characters as they continue to carry out their revised plans. However, this attempt will end in a significant setback. This element is the story's Low-Point; it's an all is lost moment. Maybe an ally dies, or there is an unexpected event that leaves the story's protagonist and readers to feel like the antagonist might prevail. The protagonist reaches a state of depression; they despair about how everything has gone wrong. Leave the readers with a character who is in an emotionally conflicted state, suffering in the face of responsibility. This Low-Point marks the end of the Second-Act. Note that no new characters or information should appear after Act-Two ends. This guards against readers feeling cheated out of a good ending. New reveals can happen, but only if they were teased or alluded to from an earlier point in the story.

THE PAYOFF ELEMENTS

Act-Three: This is the story's Pay-off. Its requirements pay off the set-up and buildup of Act-One and Act-Two.

The Final-Push. In this part of the story, the protagonist regroups from their despair and deliberate about their crisis. They face no good or easy choices here; they realize that they will have to lose something and change in a drastic way, making a sacrifice to solve the main problem. The solution should seem impossible to achieve. The story's pace and tension increases as the stakes are raised again for the protagonist.

The Climax, this is the final conflict. The highest point of tension is at the Climatic-Moment, the story's moment of truth. Here the protagonist makes a final choice and action that's the opposite of how they acted at the story's start. They make a necessary sacrifice and complete the protagonist's character-arc and answer the Middle Turning Point's Dramatic-Question. It also resolves or fails to solve the story's main problem. Either way, the story's controlling-idea and meaning are realized, satisfying the reader's expectations.

The Resolution. Here the scenes clearly show the story's meaning and how the characters and their world has changed from the story's inception. Demonstrate the characters mastery or failure to master the internal and external changes that have occurred. Leave the readers content with all the story's loose ends tied up.

WHAT IS THE POINT OF VIEW?

The Point of View: This is how the writer chooses to present the written story to the audience. Usually, done via a perspective of one particular type of point of view, first person, second person, or third person.

First Person: This point of view reveals the story through a narrator who's also a character within their own story. (Example: "I saw her play the guitar.") First person pronoun examples include I, me, my, mine, our.

Second Person: This point of view is told by the narrator referring to the reader as you. (Example: "You saw her play the guitar.") Second person pronoun examples include you, your, you're.

Third Person: This point of view shows the story from a narrative distance. (Example: "Jack saw her play the guitar.") This perspective is from outside of the story. Three main types of third-person point of view, they are limited, objective, and omniscient. Third Person Limited perspective is limited to what one character thinks and experiences. Third Person Omniscient means the narrator has an unlimited view of everything, allowing infinite details and commentary about all the characters. Third Person Objective means that the narrator tells the story with an unbiased viewpoint. They relay only facts and events to readers, avoiding character's thoughts, feelings, past knowledge, and experiences. Pronoun examples are he, his, him, her, she, it, they.

WRITE AN OUTLINE OR NOT?

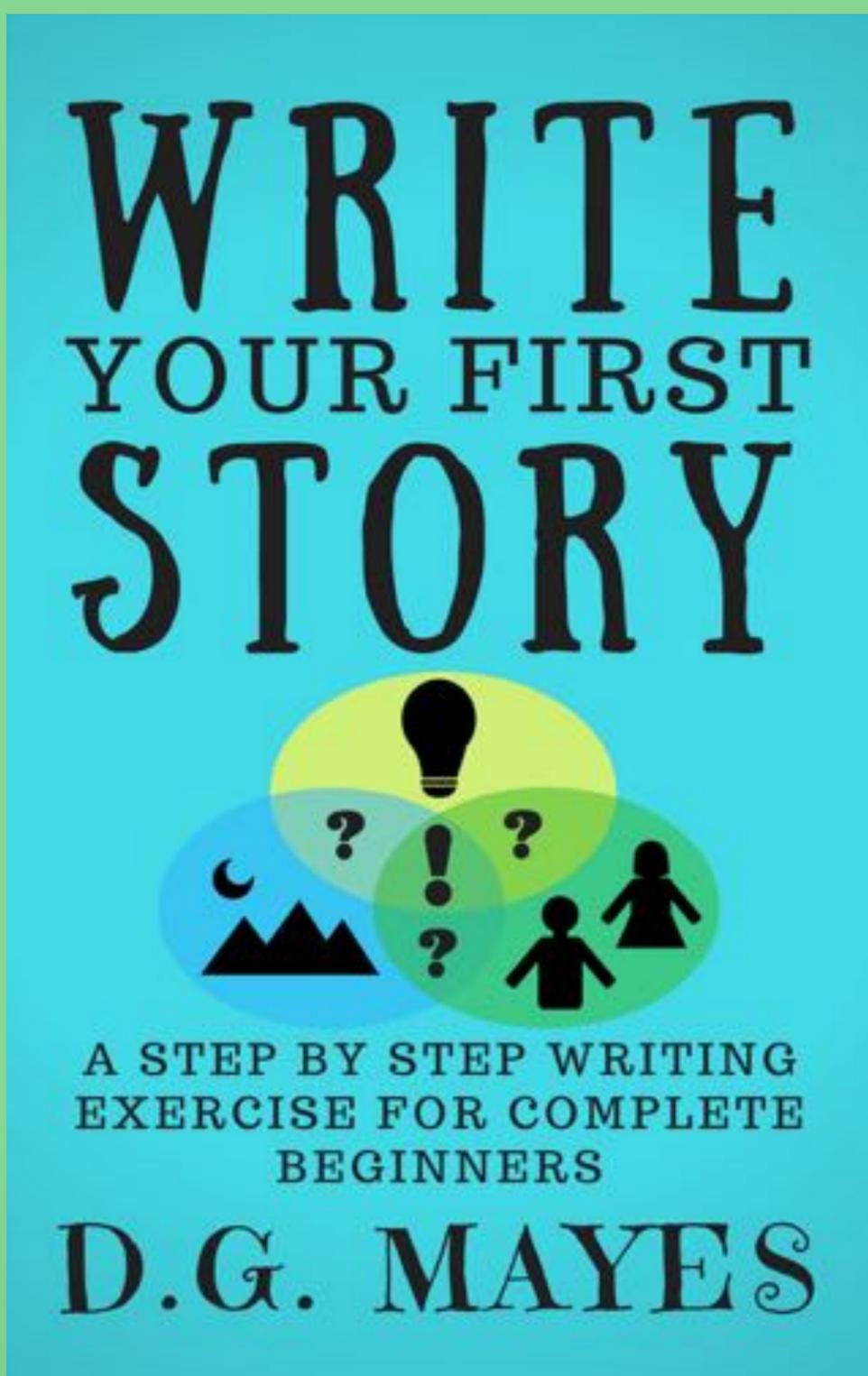
To Outline or Not? Some writers create a scene list for the story. The purpose of the outline is to map out each of the Act's requirements before writing the story, this provides a framework and helps keep the writer from leaving out any essential elements. The outline may include obligatory scenes and conventions for their story as well as all of the story's plot points. Each scene description contains characters, their immediate goal, the current setting and a clear explanation of the scene's events. Those events include what conflict happens, what the characters choose to do about it, and what new situation and conflict occur as a result of the character's choice. I recommend the outlining approach if you are a new writer.

Pants it! Writers familiar with story-writing elements, structure, and genre may decide to "pants it," meaning to write without an outline. Some writers feel like this approach gives them a greater sense of creative freedom. They like to see where the story will take them as they write. In other words, it allows them to have new ideas while writing, and change a story's direction without reworking an outline.



WRITE YOUR FIRST STORY!

Ready to write your first story? If so, then check out Write Your First Story. This book provides more story depth and bonus story-writing tips, expanding on the essential story elements and structure found in Your First Look @ Story. Also, it delivers a detailed scene by scene walk-through for helping writers complete their first story outline. This step by step exercise will enable you to Write Your First Story!



Content Includes

- WHAT MAKES IT A STORY?
- WHY ARE YOU WRITING THE STORY?
- WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?
- WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS?
- WHEN AND WHERE IS THE SETTING?
- WHAT IS THE POINT OF VIEW?
- WRITE THE STORY'S OUTLINE.
- STORY WRITING TIPS.

[LEARN MORE](#)

THANK YOU!

Thank you for checking out Your First Look @ Story. I hope this that document gives you an understanding of what it takes to make a story, and may it spark your interest in learning more about how stories work.

My intent going forward is to craft more resources and writing exercises to help beginning writers to expand their knowledge. If you would like to stay up to date, then visit writeyourfirststory.com, follow me on Twitter @YourFirst_Story, or if you haven't done so already, sign up for my newsletter and learn when the latest resources become available.

How can I help you? Let me know what resources that you would want me to develop in the future. Maybe it's an outlining exercise that focuses on a particular genre of story, or a book that dives deeper into a specific part of story-writing. Whatever it is, feel free to write to me at writeyourfirststory@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

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I NEED YOUR HELP

Hello dear reader,

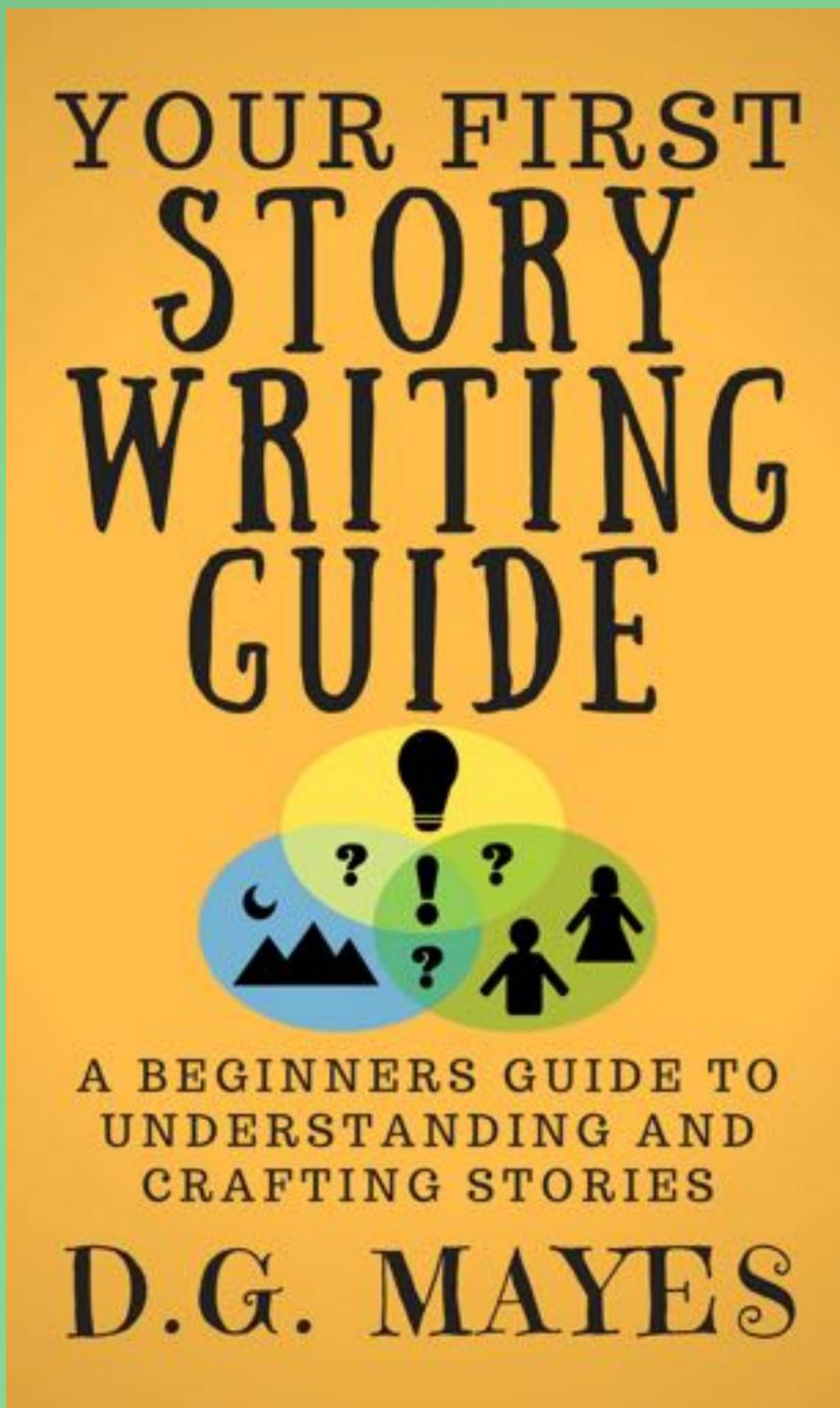
This book is an attempt to reach out, share, and help other people. I want to devote more time to creating resources that help others bring their ideas to life.

Unfortunately, I'm limited in my capacity to reach people. Being diagnosed with a plethora of severe disorders that affect how I think, feel, hear, and act has caused me to accept certain limitations. I've refocused my life, and how I help others around me. But I want to help more people, and to do this I'll need your help.

As a reader, you have the power to help me reach out to others. If you know anyone who might benefit from this book, then please tell them about it. Word of mouth is a powerful force, and if you choose to wield that power, then it will only cost a moment of your time, and it will make a meaningful difference in my life. Whether face to face or on social media, please consider helping me by informing others about this book. I kindly thank you.

Sincerely,
D.G. Mayes

Available Now!



Expand your knowledge of story writing, create deep and relatable characters, craft a more vibrant story world, and give readers meaningful story experiences. Learn to break-down, outline, and deliver a story of any length. Craft great scenes, keep readers hooked, and so much more.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Content

Includes

- LET'S LOOK AT A STORY?
- WHAT DOES A STORY NEED?
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- WHAT ABOUT SUB-PLOTS?
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- WHAT ABOUT THE SETTING?
- HOW TO STRUCTURE A STORY?
- WHAT'S IN ACT ONE?
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- WHAT IS A SCENE?
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- WHAT ABOUT STORY LENGTH?
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