

STORY IDEAS: THEIR STORY (PART 2)



You'll have lots of interesting facts noted down from your interview. These facts might not feel like a story yet.

Don't panic, there are lots of ways to write a 'real story'. To start, let's think about your *reader's* feelings:

What feelings connect the interview together?

Can you describe the facts in a way that helps a reader feel something?

WRITING UP YOUR INTERVIEW

Think of the main feelings that your partner shared during their interview. Were they excited, nervous, sad, joyful? Was there a mixture of feelings?

People often find it easier to read a story if it has something called an 'emotional arc'. They need something to connect with.

EMOTIONAL ARCS

WHAT IS AN ARC?

Think of a road going up and down hills. At the top of each hill, you feel happy, at the bottom you feel sad.

A 'story arc' is what writers call the shape of these emotional ups and downs. Today we'll concentrate on two shapes that an 'emotional arc' can take:



MAN IN A HOLE

The first arc we'll look at goes high → low → high. This often gets called the 'man in a hole' arc.



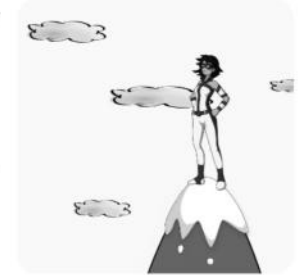
It can look like this: The main character starts in a good place. Then something happens. They have to struggle. In the end, they're in a good (or better) place again.

Here are some stories with a 'man in a hole' structure:

- Little Red Riding Hood (Classic Fairy Tale)
- The Gruffalo (by Julia Donaldson)
- The Hobbit (by J.R.R. Tolkien)
- Skulduggery Pleasant (by Derek Landy)

RAGS TO RICHES

The shape of this one is like climbing from the bottom of a mountain to the top. It goes low → high. This simple shape works well for stories about achievements.



'Rags to Riches' stories are a two-part emotional journey. The main character starts in a difficult situation. Then they do something/ something happens and they end in a good situation.

Examples of this sort of arc are:

- Cinderella (classic fairy tale)
- Matilda (by Roald Dahl)
- Holes (by Louis Sachar)

FACTS WITH FEELINGS

There are lots of different shapes of emotional arcs. The key emotions from your interview make up the emotional arc for your partner's story.

THE BEGINNING: Catch your reader's attention with the emotions your partner felt before.

THE MIDDLE: The middle of your story is normally a big event. If this is tricky think about your partner's most recent achievement and treat that as an event. Instead, you could describe how they feel just now about their event/hobby/skill.

THE END: The ending of a non-fiction story is called the 'conclusion'. They give your reader something to think about. Your partner's feelings about the future will help.

If you want to end with a positive feeling you could encourage the reader to get involved somehow (eg. visit the place, learn the skill, start the hobby).

Please note, your ending doesn't have to be positive. Stories show all sorts of emotions. If your partner doesn't feel positive, your story should explain that as well.

SHARING YOUR STORY



You can share any story on Celebrating Stories whenever you like (it's free and easy to join, and you might win a writing prize!).

We would love to see your non-fiction story too. To keep people's details private online please remember to change your partner's name in the story.

We look forward to reading it, All the best, John