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What Makes a Story...a Story?

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Why Are Stories Important?

A story tells us about an event or series of events, either real or fictional (made-up). Stories are told to interest, entertain, and teach us. Stories help us connect with others, communicate ideas, and imagine life's possibilities. To help students understand, analyze, and remember stories they read or hear, it is important for them to identify the different components, or parts, of a story. Other names for "parts of a story" are story structure or story grammar.

What Are the Parts of a Story?

Even the most basic stories have a beginning, middle, and end. However, there are other story

elements that are necessary for a story to make sense and to keep a reader's interest. The following are some of the components of a good story:



- **Setting** – The setting of the story is *when* and *where* a story takes place. For example, the story might take place right now, last year, hundreds of years ago, or in the future. The story might take place in the woods, on another planet, in the ocean, or in a castle.



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- **Characters** – The characters of a story are the *people* or *animals* in the story. There are often two categories of characters in a story—the villains are the “bad guys” who create a problem for the heroes, and the heroes are the “good guys” who look for a solution to the problem. It is also important for students to understand the characters’ emotions in order to fully comprehend a story.



- **Story Starter** – The story starter is the *beginning* event which sets the other events in motion. Often, the story starter is a problem or conflict which occurs because two or more of the story’s characters want to achieve different goals.



- **Events** – An event is *something that happens* in the story. The activities the characters perform as they try to resolve a problem or conflict are the events in the story.



- **Plot** – The plot is *all of the action and events* that take place in the story. An interesting plot holds the reader’s attention and makes him/her want to continue reading.



- **Solution** – The solution or outcome is *the event that completes the story or resolves the problem* that began with the story starter.



- **Closing Events** – The closing events are *the activities that wrap up the story*. Closing events often tell how characters feel about the solution to the problem. For example, “They lived happily ever after” is the closing event found in many fairy tales.



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