

**beyond
booked up**

Flash Fiction

An introduction to
very short stories!



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Introducing Flash Fiction

Welcome to the Beyond Booked Up Flash Fiction collection!

So what is Flash Fiction? Put simply, it's a very short story. It's normally between 300 and 500 words in length, but it could be as short as 50 words! Because it's so short, it normally captures one single event, offering just a glimpse of a moment in time.

This collection is designed to give you a peek into the world of Flash Fiction. The stories we've chosen offer something for everyone – from the laugh-out-loud humour of 'Chocolate' to the intriguing science fiction of 'Routine'. The one thing these stories have in common is that they're short – less than 500 words each – so you can read them in a flash!

We hope that after reading the stories you'll be feeling inspired to write one of your own. At the back of this booklet we've included some writing tips from Calum Kerr, author and founder of National Flash Fiction Day.

So get reading, get writing, and enjoy Flash Fiction!

Something to Tell You

by Aidan Chambers

Flash Fiction can be written in many different forms, and this story is told using only dialogue. In 'Something to Tell You', Ben has something really important to say to Nathalie, but will she let him explain?

Ben and Nathalie are standing on a bridge over a river.

Ben: There's something I have to tell you.

Nat: You're dumping me.

Ben: No!

Nat: You are. You're breaking us up.

Ben: No, that's not it.

Nat: I knew it. You've been different lately.

Ben: No I haven't.

Nat: For the last few weeks.

Ben: No I haven't.

Nat: Yes you have. You've been sort of quiet.

Ben: Because of what I have to tell you.

Nat: You've met somebody else.

Ben: No.

Nat: You have. It's what I've always dreaded.

Ben: It isn't that at all.

Nat: Where did you meet her?

Ben: I haven't met anybody.

Nat: What's her name?

Ben: There isn't anybody.

Nat: Is she blonde or brunette? I bet she's brunette.

Ben: No.

Nat: Not ginger, is she? That would be the worst.

Ben: No.

Nat: You want a change. That's what it is.

Ben: No, I don't.

Nat: You're bored with me.

Ben: I am not bored with you.

Nat: How long have we been going out together?

Ben: What?

Nat: There! You see! You can't remember.

Ben: Eight months. We've been going out for eight months. Eight months next Friday, actually.

Nat: But you had to think about it. Had to work it out, didn't you.

Ben: Listen, Nat.

Nat: I don't need to listen. I can guess the whole story already.

Ben: Please, Nat, listen. There's something I have to tell you.

Nat: All right. Have it your own way. Really upset me.

Ben: It's that -

Nat: Tell me all the gory details. Go on.

Ben: My mother.

(Pause)

Ben: She's in hospital.

(Pause)

Ben: They thought she had cancer.

(Pause)

Ben: We were afraid she might die.

(Pause)

Ben: That's why I never told you. Didn't want to upset you.

(Pause)

Ben: But they think she's all right. They're not totally sure. But she's probably OK. She's coming home tomorrow.

(Pause)

Nat: Thank god! I thought you were going to dump me.

Ben: Excuse me?

Nat: It would've been the end of me. Honestly, Ben, it would have totally been the end of me.

Ben: Did you hear what I said?

Nat: Yes. Course I did. And I'm really sorry about your mum. But what a relief!

Ben: Nat!

Nat: I'm here for you, Ben.

(Pause)

Ben: Nat.

Nat: What?

Ben: Go chuck yourself in the river.

Nat: Ben! What's the matter? Ben! Don't walk off like that.

From *The Kissing Game* by Aidan Chambers, published by Bodley Head. Reproduced by permission of The Random House Group Ltd.

About Aidan Chambers

Aidan Chambers has written seven young adult novels, six of which make up the award-winning Dance Sequence, as well as short stories, plays, and two novels for children. To read more Flash Fiction by Aidan, try *The Kissing Game: Stories of Defiance and Flash Fictions*, a collection of short stories and Flash Fictions. Find out more about Aidan at www.aidanchambers.co.uk

Chocolate

by Kevin Crossley-Holland

A funny story that Kevin came up with after hearing an urban myth. When meeting Annie's mum for the first time, a box of chocolates was meant to break the ice. But things didn't quite go to plan...

It was a cool idea.

I mean, I was meeting Annie's mum for the first time, and she was going to cook tea for us. So I figured that giving her a box of chocolates would please them both. You know, two birds with one stone.

I'd never gone into the chocolate shop before, and it was quite fancy.

'Not too pricey or anything,' I told the man behind the glass counter - he was wearing a straw hat with a scarlet ribbon round it. 'I've only got three quid and it's for my girlfriend's mum.'

'Nice work,' the man said. 'What's she like, then?'

'I haven't met her yet. Actually, my girlfriend says she's a bit of a truffle.' I grinned. 'She's got three chins.'

'Really?' the chocolate-man replied.

'Yes, and she says her dad's a smoothie.'

'Right,' said the man. 'Just a mouthful, then. A taster.'

As soon as I'd shaken hands with Annie's mum, I gave her the little box of chocolates, done up with a ribbon.

'Oh!' squeaked Annie. 'You're so sweet. I hope you picked my favourites.'

Annie's mum pushed the box into her chins. 'They're not yours,' she said. 'Anyhow, tea's ready. Sit yourselves down.'

When I met Annie's dad, I went hot and cold and soft-centred. I jammed my hands together, and tried to figure out what to do.

'What is it, dear?' asked Annie's mum. 'Are you praying?'

'Yes,' I replied, quick as a snickersnack. 'Yes, we always pray, we say grace before supper.'

'You never told me you were so religious,' Annie said.

'And you,' I whispered in a hoarse voice as soon as her mum and dad had gone out into the kitchen, 'you never told me your dad's got a chocolate shop.'

'Chocolate' by Kevin Crossley-Holland from *Short Too!* (OUP, 2011), copyright © Kevin Crossley-Holland 2011, used by permission of Oxford University Press.

About Kevin Crossley-Holland

Kevin Crossley-Holland is a poet and writer for children. He writes books, plays and poetry collections both for children and adults. Kevin is married with four children and likes to spend as much time as possible at his home in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. To read more Flash Fiction by Kevin, try *Short!* or *Short Too!*, two collections of very short stories. Find out more about Kevin at www.kevincrossley-holland.com

My Problem is I Don't Know When to Stop

by Morris Gleitzman

This is another example of the way in which Flash Fiction can take different forms. In 'My Problem is I Don't Know When to Stop', Morris Gleitzman tells a whole story in just one sentence!

'Oh, Graham, pet,' said Mrs Glossop, looking upset, 'this sentence is so long,' and it's true, I've only got myself to blame, I did completely ignore an instruction from a teacher, because as Mrs Glossop says herself, 'full stops are our friends and we must learn to use them,' but I ignored her on account of when I pick up a pen in an English lesson and use my imagination I don't want it to stop, so Mrs Glossop sentenced me to a week of lunch-time detention which wasn't that long really, not given I'd be completely finished now if I hadn't asked for another twenty-seven offences to be taken into consideration including skipping the full stops when I read a book and scratching my initials on to Anthony Webster's lunch box without any full stops and scribbling out all the full stops in all the books in the public library which was clearly an exaggeration (so was the lunch box) but on my last day of lunch-time detention two men in suits arrived at school and took me off in a car with tinted windows and asked me lots of questions in a very hot room about vandalism in libraries and completely ignored me when I reminded them that I'm a very keen reader and I've had my own library card since I was three, not to mention my own lunch box since I was four, facts they ignored because they were too busy yelling at me about criminal behaviour and then getting me convicted and sentenced to ninety-nine years in jail which made Mrs Glossop burst into tears when she came to visit me here in my cell and carry on about how my sentence is so terribly long except I have to say there was something completely fake about her tears and she had a look in her eyes which has left me very suspicious that the reason I'm locked up in this high-security prison isn't because of any scribbled library books or scratched lunch boxes, it's because – are you thinking the same thing, dear reader – it's because I gave Mrs Glossop a very long sentence and now she's given me one back?

'My Problem is I Don't Know When to Stop' by Morris Gleitzman, from *Wow! 366* compiled by Scholastic Ltd, published by Scholastic Children's Books, an imprint of Scholastic Ltd. www.scholastic.co.uk/zone ISBN 978-1-407107-98-1 Reproduced by permission of Morris Gleitzman.

About Morris Gleitzman

Morris Gleitzman was born in Lincolnshire and moved to Australia in his teens. He worked as a paperboy, a shelf-stacker, a frozen chicken de-froster, an assistant to a fashion designer and more before taking a degree in Professional Writing at Canberra College and becoming a writer. He has written for TV, stage, newspapers and magazines but is best known for his hugely successful children's books.

Morris Gleitzman has written 35 books, including *Bumface*, *Doubting Thomas*, *Once*, *Grace*, and *Extra Time*. To read more short stories by Morris, try *Give Peas a Chance*, or *Pizza Cake*. Find out more about Morris at www.morrisgleitzman.com

Making Friends

by Chris Higgins

When Will meets another boy at the beach, he thinks his boring holiday might be about to get more interesting.

'There's nothing to do here,' I complained.

'Go and explore,' said Mum. 'It's stopped raining.' Our holiday home was an old tin-miner's cottage on the Cornish cliff tops. It was dark and dusty and smelled as if it had been shut up for ages.

I headed down the steep path towards the beach. It was deserted and stank of seaweed. I sat on a rock, alone and miserable.

Then I noticed a boy, bare to the waist and so skinny I could count his ribs. He was squatting by a rock pool.

'Aren't you freezing?'

'Don't feel the cold, me.' His voice was rough with the Cornish burr. 'I like it down here. I hate being cooped up inside.'

He held out a grey shell. Inside, thin brown threads waved in the air. I recoiled.

'It's alive!'

He sucked out the contents. 'Not any more, it ain't,' he said, and we both laughed.

'Look!' He pointed up at the sky.

A bird hovered motionless above us. Suddenly it plummeted like a lift into the sea and came up with a fish in its mouth.

'Gannet,' he explained. 'Always hungry. Like me.'

We clambered over the rocks together and he showed me spiny sea-urchins, shrimps, spider crabs and a creature called a sea hare that has a shell *in* its body. We roamed the beach, sifting through piles of seaweed to find periwinkles and worms and tiny sponges that if you pressed them, squirted water. Down by the shoreline we discovered eels burying themselves in the sand.

Mum called me from the cliff top. 'Will? Come and see what I've found!'

'Go you,' he said and turned away. At the top I looked back for him, but he'd disappeared. Out on the rocks was a lone grey seal.

Mum had an old book on mining disasters. 'There was one here, you know. They'd have been buried alive underground. See this photo? Some of them were only boys.'

From the page my new friend grinned at me. I ran back to the beach to find him, but he was nowhere to be seen. As I watched, the seal slipped from the rock and swam gracefully out to sea.

'Making Friends' by Chris Higgins, from *Wow! 366* compiled by Scholastic Ltd, published by Scholastic Children's Books, an imprint of Scholastic Ltd. www.scholastic.co.uk/zone ISBN 978-1-407107-98-1 Reproduced by permission of Chris Higgins.

About Chris Higgins

Chris Higgins is the bestselling author of many books for tween and teen girls including *32C*, *That's Me*. Chris is a former English and Drama teacher and a mother of four daughters. She lives in the far west of Cornwall. If you'd like to read more by Chris Higgins, check out *The Secrets Club: Alice in the Spotlight*, or to find out more visit www.chrishigginshatsme.com

Routine

by Calum Kerr

This story was written exclusively for the Beyond Booked Up Flash Fiction collection and presents an intriguing glimpse of another world.

Jess slapped at her alarm for the third time and peeled back the covers. She hoped that some cool air would help wake her up and force her out of bed. She should have been up already, and if she didn't move soon Mum would be mad.

'Mum!' she shouted, without raising her head from the oh-so-comfortable pillow. 'Where's my uniform?'

There was a moment's silence then she heard Mum's voice. 'It's where you left it.'

Jess nodded, her face rubbing on the smooth, warm fabric. That made sense.

'Have you made my lunch?' she shouted.

'Of course I have. I always do,' came the voice again. 'Are you going to get up now?'

Jess groaned as she pushed herself up from the bed. Her Velcro pyjamas detached from the sheet and she floated free, up into the bedroom. She twisted as she rose and extended a hand to brace herself on the approaching ceiling. Then, having stilled herself, she scanned around. Her uniform was indeed where she had left it, hanging in space in the far corner.

You had to praise zero-g, she thought, it kept clothes out of the way and, mostly, wrinkle free.

She kicked across the room, and grabbed at the thin suit, performing the daily ballet that took her from sleep suit to uniform in a simple series of moves.

Job done, she pushed down, turned, kicked her feet off the ceiling and jetted through the door which opened in front of her, into the main part of the habitation bubble.

She bounced from the floor, twisted, and pushed off again, coming to a halt against the kitchen counter. A brown bag was waiting for her. She opened it and looked inside.

'Aw, Mum!' she whined. 'Cheese again?'

A panel on the side wall flashed as Mum's voice emerged from the speaker below it.

'You know you need plenty of calcium up here, so don't argue. Now hurry up or you'll be late for school.'

© 'Routine' produced by permission of Calum Kerr.

About Calum Kerr

Calum Kerr is a writer, editor and lecturer in creative writing. His stories have appeared on Radio 4, in print and online. In 2011 he embarked on a project to write a piece of Flash Fiction every day for 365 days. In 2012 he coordinated the first ever National Flash Fiction Day. To find out more about Calum visit www.calumkerr.co.uk

The Monster

by Jon Mayhew

This story was written for 247tales, an online writing competition that challenged anyone to write a story using 247 words or fewer. In 'The Monster', Jon Mayhew proves it's still possible to pack plenty of action into a story of less than 250 words!

Dakkar plunged deeper than he'd ever dived before. The weeds swayed in the ebb and flow of the tide. Craggy rocks formed caves and hiding places for darting silver fish.

I love the sea, Dakkar thought. Here, I'm free from scheming adults, from betrayal and strife. There's just the tide and the fish.

Something moved, coiling up on itself like a snake.

Dakkar nearly let out his breath. Beneath him a long, tentacle curled up and round his ankle. Pain stabbed through his leg as the creature began to crush. Dakkar gritted his teeth and pulled the dagger from his belt.

The giant octopus unfolded itself from the tiny hole it had hidden in. It was the size of a small carriage. Its skin boiled with colour, pulsing red and green as more arms surged up towards Dakkar.

Silently screaming, Dakkar kicked and lashed with his knife. The octopus pulled him deeper until his chest felt as if it would burst. Its strange eyes stared. Under the body, within the writhing mass was a sharp, snapping beak.

Dakkar kicked towards the creature. Suddenly, they were on a collision course. The octopus tried to slide more tentacles around Dakkar but he plunged the knife into the monster's eye. Black mist filled the water. Dakkar felt the creature's grip tighten. He stabbed again, blindly. His lungs burned but the octopus's hold loosened.

Dakkar kicked his way to freedom. The surface glimmered above him.

And then he saw the shark.

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About Jon Mayhew

Jon Mayhew is a man with a dark imagination, who has always loved writing and storytelling. An English teacher for 20 years, he now works as a specialist teacher for children with autism. He has four children himself and, when neither teaching nor writing, he plays in ceilidh bands and runs marathons. Jon lives between the ancient cities of Chester and Liverpool.

If 'The Monster' has given you a taste for underwater adventure, look out for Jon's latest book *Monster Odyssey: The Eye of Neptune*.

An Easy Cure for Insomnia

by Pratima Mitchell

Many of us know how it feels to not be able to get to sleep. In this story, Minnie and Baba try everything they can think of to help their Grandfather get to sleep.

Grandfather Singh hadn't slept properly for days.
He complained, 'I just nodded off when an ambulance went by!'
'Dee daw dee daw,' sang six-year-old Baba.
'It got worse...'
'Cats?' asked Minnie, Baba's sister.
Grandfather sighed. 'And the party down the street – people shouting, doors slamming. Then the dawn chorus started...'
'Better consult the doctor,' said Minnie's mum, hurrying the children to school.
'Never,' replied Grandfather. 'He'll just give me sleeping pills.'

A week later, Grandfather's eyes had sunk into their sockets. He felt exhausted.
'A prize to anyone who comes up with a cure for my insomnia,' he announced. 'Anything you want,' he added recklessly. 'Any treat that lasts a day.'
'Like the zoo?' Baba asked.
'The zoo with ice creams and a bar of chocolate each' said Minnie, who had bargaining power.
'The zoo and London Eye. No, no! Wembley and the big match,' shouted Baba.
Minnie suggested roller skating in the park. 'We'd need to buy Rollerblades.'
'Just come up with the goods,' Grandfather grumbled.

Baba and Minnie tried lots of cures – evening massage, which didn't work; hot milk with honey at night; a tape of the sea. Nothing did the trick.
Finally Minnie got Mum to invite Mrs Chatterjee to supper.
Mrs Chatterjee was the most boring person they knew. Her voice was like a hornet droning... Or a tropical frog. She talked and talked but never said anything interesting.
When Grandfather heard, he said he would eat in his own room.
'She will be very offended,' said Minnie's mum.

Mrs Chatterjee came to supper. Mum made biryani rice with lamb, cauliflower-potato, dal and carrot halvah with vanilla ice cream.
Mrs Chatterjee talked non-stop for three hours.
She talked about her five grandchildren. She talked about her new kitchen. She talked in great detail about how she had booked a holiday. Even Minnie's eyes were closing.
Grandfather was nodding; his face was nearly in the pudding bowl. Minnie and Baba led him to his bedroom. Minnie took off his slippers, and tucked him up. He murmured, 'In all my life, I've never felt so tired – or so bored...'
Of course he slept like a little baby, and Minnie and Baba got their Rollerblades.

'An Easy Cure for Insomnia' by Pratima Mitchell, from *Wow! 366* compiled by Scholastic Ltd, published by Scholastic Children's Books, an imprint of Scholastic Ltd. www.scholastic.co.uk/zone ISBN 978-1-407107-98-1 Reproduced by permission of Pratima Mitchell.

About Pratima Mitchell

Pratima Mitchell has been writing since the age of 11, and has published over 30 books. Born in India, she has lived all over the world, including the United States, Nigeria, Austria and France. She now lives in Oxford. To find out more about Pratima go to: www.pratimamitchell.com

Flower of the Fern

retold by Jan Pieńkowski

This retelling of a famous Polish legend, about a magical plant called the Fern Flower, poses the question: what would you sacrifice for untold riches?

It is midsummer night, the shortest night of the year. The boys light a bonfire in a forest clearing and compete with daring leaps over the flames. Bartek strides away into the dark woods on a quest.

He hears the laughing girls down by the river. Each girl puts a candle on a piece of bark and floats it. They run along the bank as the current takes the bobbing lights down the river; the one that wins the race brings the promise of marriage. Kasia's mind is on Bartek as she finds a long reed to keep her little craft midstream.

In the heart of the forest a single dazzling flower blooms at midnight. It is said that whoever finds it and picks it before the cock crows at dawn can have great riches. But there is a catch – those riches cannot be shared.

Bartek goes deeper into the forest. Suddenly a white shape glides, silent, across his path; it's only an owl. He hears the howl of wolves. In headlong flight he trips across a fallen tree, tumbling into a bramble thicket. The thorns rip his clothes. A startled snake slithers across his foot. Glow-worms light up a pathway through the mossy undergrowth, guiding him into a glade of ferns. A pulsating blue light draws him towards it. At the centre Bartek sees a beautiful flower, like nothing he has ever seen before. He must have it.

He picks the flower and hides it under his shirt. The cock crows.

His torn clothes become magnificent princely garments; he sees jewelled rings on his fingers and a splendid black stallion pawing the ground. Bartek leaps into the saddle and gallops back to his friends.

'Look at me, I'm rich! I can have anything in the world.'

Kasia runs up to him, putting her hands on his. 'You're hurt, you're bleeding.'

Bartek starts to take a jewelled ring off his finger to give to her; as he does so, he feels the icy roots of the Fern Flower tighten around his heart. He slips the ring back on, turns and spurs his horse back into the forest.

One day he will return, but that's another story.

'Flower of the Fern' by Jan Pieńkowski, from *Wow! 366* compiled by Scholastic Ltd, published by Scholastic Children's Books, an imprint of Scholastic Ltd. www.scholastic.co.uk/zone ISBN 978-1-407107-98-1 Reproduced by permission of Jan Pieńkowski.

About Jan Pieńkowski

Jan Pieńkowski wrote his first book for his father when he was eight. Since then he has written and illustrated many more books, including the *MEG & MOG* series, and has won numerous awards. Jan has recently worked on a more complete illustrated version of the Flower of the Fern legend for his new book, *Polish Tales*, which was published by Walker Books in autumn 2014.

The Dragon

by Angie Sage

Another story from the 247tales competition; in 'The Dragon' Angie Sage creates a rich fantasy world in just 247 words.

Talmar looked out of the tiny arrow slit at the top of the castle tower, watching the Besiegers far below finishing the trebuchet - a giant catapult. It would not be long now.

The siege had turned Talmar into a watcher. She had watched her mother and her little sister being locked into the safe room. Talmar was terrified of enclosed spaces.

She had bitten someone and run to the top of the tower. Fast.

Talmar had watched her father patrol the battlements. She had watched the arrow that flew in a perfect arc towards her father. She had watched her father topple backwards and fall on the wrong side of the castle: the outside. She had heard the rest. The Besiegers made a particular noise when they ate their prey.

Now something was watching Talmar: her baby dragon sat in the palm of her hand watching a tear run down her cheek.

Talmar held her hand up to the arrow slit. 'Fly free.'

Talmar watched her dragon fly high. She saw it settle on top of the trebuchet, and then she heard it call: skreeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

Talmar saw a dark shape appear on the horizon.

She watched it coming towards the castle. She watched the mother dragon swoop down to pick up her baby, flames roaring, talons grabbing.

She watched the Besiegers flee in terror.

Talmar watched the castle gates open, the people pour out and the celebrations begin. Soon she would stop watching. Soon, but not yet.

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About Angie Sage

Angie Sage is the author of the bestselling *Septimus Heap* series. She was born in London and lived there until she was nine, when her family moved to a village in Kent. At school she liked English best and also History and Art. She currently lives in a very old house in Somerset.

If you enjoyed 'The Dragon', why not try *Magyk*, the first in the *Septimus Heap* series. To find out more about the series, and Angie, go to www.septimusheap.com

More Flash Fiction!

If these nine stories have left you wanting more, don't despair! Here is a list of some of our favourite collections of very short stories and Flash Fiction websites:

Short and Scary! by Louise Cooper

Short! and Short Too! by Kevin Crossley-Holland

Short and Shocking! by Maggie Pearson

Wow! 366: Speedy Stories in Just 366 Words published by Scholastic Children's Books

National Flash Fiction Day: <http://nationalflashfictionday.co.uk>

Short stories

If you fancy reading something a little longer, here are some great short story collections – ask for them at your school library.

***Haunted* published by Andersen Press**

A collection of terrifying ghost stories from fantastic authors including Mal Peet, Susan Cooper and Matt Haig.

***All in the Family* edited by Tony Bradman**

These short stories look at the many and varied aspects of family life, from getting a new stepfather to visiting relatives in Jamaica.

***Survival (Usborne True Stories)* by Paul Dowswell**

This non-fiction book reveals the details behind some of the most amazing true stories of survival.

***King Arthur and a World of Other Stories* by Geraldine McCaughrean**

A magical collection of myths and legends from around the world.

***War: Stories of Conflict* edited by Michael Morpurgo**

From the Crusades of the Middle Ages to the modern-day Middle East, this story collection explores the immediate dangers of war and what happens when the fighting is over.

Writing your own Flash Fiction

Now that you've read our pick of Flash Fiction, it's time to write your own. Follow our step-by-step guide to writing a very short story!

1

Finding inspiration

Inspiration for Flash Fiction can come from anywhere – a film, a song, a conversation you've overheard, or an everyday object.

Think of an object – you're going to use that as a prompt to write your story.

2

From prompt to story

To turn your prompt into a story, you need to ask yourself questions about the object. Think about the five 'W' questions:

- **What** is your object? What does it look/sound/feel like?
- **Who** does the object belong to? This is your main character.
- **Why** is the object important? The answer to this question will start to give you the event that your story will tell.
- **Where** is the object? And **when**? These questions will get you thinking about the setting of your story.

Write down as much information as you can, using the mind map on the next page to help you.

3

Writing your story

Now it's time to get writing. Try to write the whole thing in one go if you can. Don't worry about it being perfect first time – you can go back and edit it later.

Here are some writing tips:

- Keep the event in the story small – don't try to pack in too many twists and turns!
- Don't give too much away too early – you need to keep some mystery to make sure the audience wants to keep reading right to the end.
- Think about what you know about your character and your object as you write.

4

Editing your story

Now's your chance to make your story as good as it can possibly be. Read the story aloud to yourself and listen out for repetitions, or any words that you could change to make it stronger.

Think particularly about your beginning and ending – could you start the story a little later into the action, or end it a little sooner – what is the earliest point your story can end and still come to a good conclusion? How about your opening and closing lines – could you change these to have more impact?

Once you're happy with your story, swap it with a friend who can give you some constructive feedback. Enjoy reading their story, and make your own story even better!

What?

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Who?

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Flash Fiction Mind Map

Why?

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Where?

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When?

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