

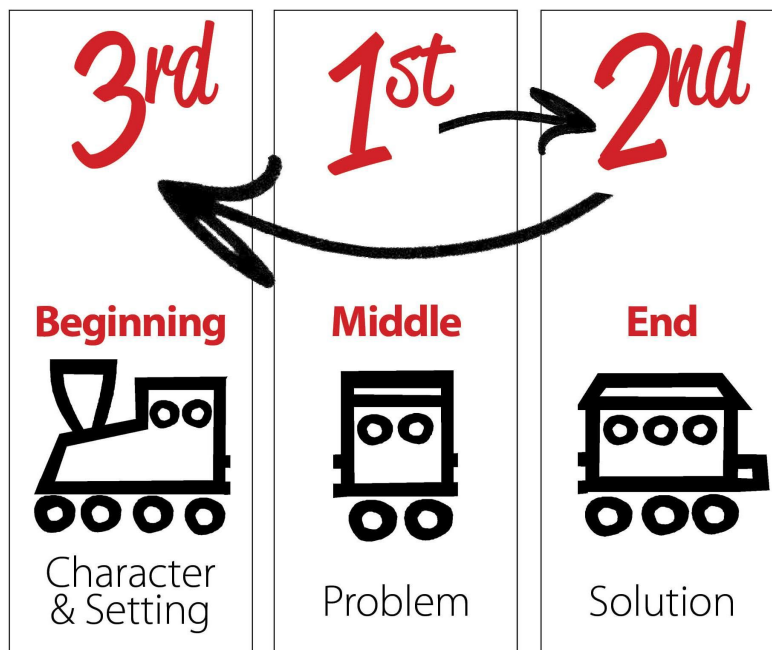
## Plan Problems into Narrative Pieces

A story typically begins with a main character in a setting who faces a challenge that he overcomes by the end. With this premise in mind, many teachers begin a narrative writing unit by having the students generate a detailed character sketch and a descriptive setting.

But, by the end of the product, many students have yet to write an actual story. Describing characters walking and talking does not constitute a narrative. Narratives include a problem. Someone (or something) wants or needs something, but an obstacle is preventing it from happening. This want or need is the problem or conflict.


















To ensure every story includes a problem, plan the middle portion first. In other words, determine the conflict the character(s) will face before writing the beginning.

*Plan stories in this order:*



With the middle in place, now consider the conclusion. What’s the solution? How does the story end? How does the character get/achieve what he wants/needs? Endings don’t have to be happy, but they are necessary. They conclude the event. Often students describe characters going places, doing things, and saying things, but none of it has a purpose. Planning the problem and the solution ensures that the story has a point. Without these two parts the reader is continually wondering Where is this going? What’s the point?

Ironically, the least important part becomes the beginning. This approach may seem contradictory to what many teachers learned. However, an elaborate setting and detailed characters are not imperative ingredients for a story. With little more than a first name and a stated location, a writer can generate a well-written story centered on finding a solution to a major problem.

Name _____ Date _____  _____ Title/Topic <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Beginning         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  Ending         </div>	Name _____ Date _____  _____ Title/Topic <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Beginning         </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  Ending         </div>	Name _____ Date _____  _____ Title/Topic <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Beginning         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Middle         </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%; margin-bottom: 5px;">  Ending         </div> </div>
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