

# Storytelling Checklist



**LYNN BOHART**

**Author, Freelance Writer, Story Coach**

# STORYTELLING CHECKLIST

GOOD storytelling is more than a recitation of events or facts of what happened to someone at a particular time or place. If you want readers to be engaged with your story and have a visceral reaction to what you write, you will need to engage them from beginning to end. Here's how.

STORYTELLING COMPONENT	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
Who is my target audience?	Know who you're writing for and what is likely to grab their attention and keep them engaged.
What's the underlying theme of the story?	Good vs evil. Coming of age. Love conquers all. Money is the root of all evil. Bonds of friendship.
Who is telling the story?	Who is narrating the story?
What is the story's point of view?	1 <sup>st</sup> person present: <i>I am</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> person past: <i>I was</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> person limited: <i>Through the eyes of one character—he/she</i> Omniscient: <i>Through the eyes of multiple characters.</i>

What is your protagonist's goal in the story? What do they want more than anything else?	The lead character's goal will serve as the narrative drive, which powers the story forward.
What is the conflict in the story?	The only reason we read a story is to follow the main character(s) as he/she conquers conflict. What stands in the way of your protagonist achieving their goal?
What are the stakes of your protagonist taking action and achieving or failing in what they hope to achieve?	This is what will make your reader 'care' about the story, so don't sugarcoat it. What does your lead character risk as he takes up this journey?
Where will you begin the story? The Inciting Incident.	Something triggers the real story. In <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> , it's when Dorothy runs away from home. If she hadn't run away, she would have made it into the storm cellar when the tornado came, and she never would have taken the trip to Oz.
How will you use the opening sentence or	Grab your readers' attention. You can do it with a question, a declarative sentence, an

paragraph (hook) to draw readers in?	exclamation, humor, or even a quote or an unexpected paragraph.
How will you use emotion to keep readers reading?	Don't be shy about infusing emotion into your story. If you don't, your story will fall flat.
How can you create a visual image and make the piece memorable?	Good writers don't 'tell' their reader what they want them to know – they show them. You do that through action, dialogue and visual images. (Show, don't tell)
Do you have a story arc?	You make a promise to your reader in the beginning and then take them on a journey to fulfil that promise. There will be a beginning, major and minor complications, a climax, and then a resolution.

5/2026

Copyright © 2025 by Lynn Bohart/Lil Dog Communications

Lildog67@icloud.com [www.lynnbohart-author.com](http://www.lynnbohart-author.com)